# THE LIFE
# OF
# THOMAS PITT

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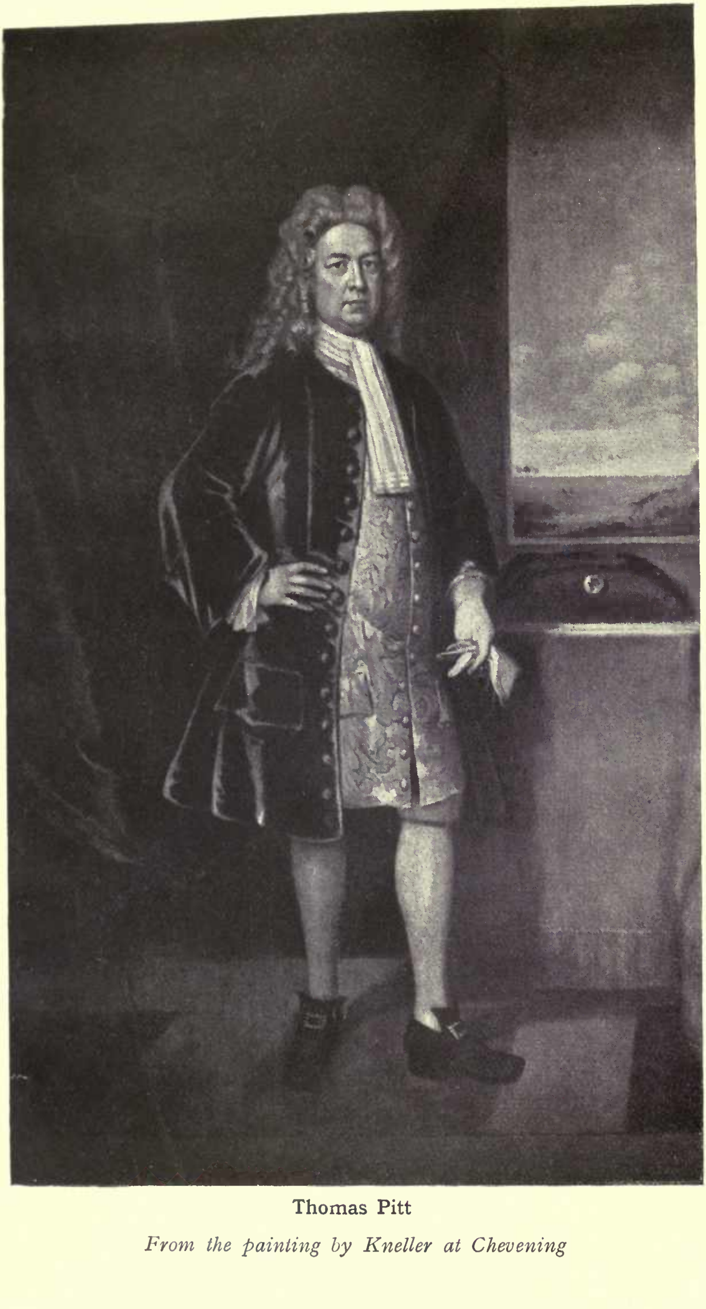

Thomas Pitt

*From the painting by Kneller at Chevening*

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# THE LIFE OF THOMAS PITT

BY

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# PREFACE

THOMAS PITT, grandfather of the great Earl of Chatham and owner of the famous Pitt diamond, was appointed Governor of Fort St George at a very critical time, when the East India Company, after carrying on a lucrative trade in India for nearly a century, had found themselves in a very dangerous position. Some eight years before, during their disastrous war with the Mogul, they had been deprived of their prosperous factories at Dacca, Patna, and Hugli; and the only foothold left to them in Bengal on the conclusion of an ignominious peace was a settlement newly founded in the face of great difficulties and sacrifice of life on a part of the present site of Calcutta. At home their Royal Charter, which purported to give them the monopoly of the Eastern trade, had become practically a dead letter by a resolution of the House of Commons, which had declared that "all subjects of England had an equal right to trade to the East Indies unless prohibited by Act of Parliament."

Whilst Pitt was on his voyage to India to take up his appointment, the monopoly of the Eastern trade was conferred by Statute on another Company, subject to the condition that the Old Company were to be allowed to retain such rights as they possessed

for three years, in order to enable them to wind up their affairs. The New Company promptly appointed and sent out to India as their representatives Presidents for the three Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, who were invested with extraordinary powers, and were followed by a squadron of men-of-war, escorting an ambassador appointed by the King to negotiate a new treaty with the Mogul. They arrived some twelve months after Pitt had taken over his Governorship: and a bitter struggle ensued between them and the officials of the Old Company. In Bombay they persuaded the Mogul's Governor of Surat to seize and imprison the President and chief officers of the Old Company. But in Madras and Bengal Pitt steadfastly refused to recognise their authority or to have any dealings with them, maintaining that the recent Act under which they claimed authority, continued the Old Company in their possessions and rights for the next three years. In the meanwhile the King's ambassador, Sir William Norris, who had had no previous Indian experience, not only failed to attain his object, which was to obtain additional concessions for the New Company, but by his refusal to accept the conditions offered him, so irritated the Mogul that he issued a peremptory edict, interdicting all English trade in India, and ordering the seizure of the effects of both Companies and the imprisonment of all Englishmen throughout his dominions. In pursuance of this order, his general, Daud Khan, marched with a large army against Madras, and demanded the surrender of the town and the estates of the Company, threatening that

unless these demands were complied with, he would take the Fort by storm and put its defenders to the sword. Full details of the siege that followed are contained in the Consultation Books of the Fort, which are still in existence. It ended in the withdrawal of Daud and his army, and the restoration, on payment to him of 25,000 rupees, of all the Company's goods that they had raided. His failure to reduce the Fort conduced greatly to the restoration of the waning prestige of the English throughout India; and during the remainder of his Governorship, Pitt continued on more friendly and intimate relations with the Mogul and his officers than any of his predecessors or successors. His successful resistance to the New Company and Daud enabled the Old Company to obtain far more advantageous terms than they could otherwise have hoped for, when the two Companies were subsequently amalgamated. After their amalgamation he retained his position as Governor for several years, during which he obtained further valuable concessions from the Mogul; completed the fortifications of Madras; and by his able administration and business capacity developed the resources and trade of the settlement, raising it to a position of prosperity and influence which it had never before attained.

It is only of late years that the great value of the work thus done by him has been recognised by historians. Appreciative references to it occur from time to time in Bruce's *Annals of the East India Company* (1600–1708), published as far back as 1810, but they are not of a character likely to attract the

attention of the general reader. No reference whatever is made to him in the very scanty notice of the early transactions of the Company given in James Mill's *History of British India* (1818). The earliest published details of several of the more important events which occurred during his Governorship appeared for the first time in Mr Talboys Wheeler's *Madras in the Olden Time*, compiled from the Official Records and Consultation Books of Fort St George and printed in Madras in 1861. But until the publication by the Hakluyt Society in 1889 of the third volume of Hedges' *Diary*, which contains *Documentary Contributions to a Biography of Thomas Pitt*, by Sir Henry Yule, President of the Society, little more was generally known of Thomas Pitt than that he had been the owner of the famous Pitt or Regent diamond, the Governor of Fort St George, and the purchaser of Old Sarum and other Parliamentary boroughs. In 1892, the publication by the Historical Manuscripts Commission of the Fortescue Manuscripts preserved at Dropmore, threw fresh light on many of the incidents disclosed by the researches of Wheeler and Yule, besides containing new materials of historical interest relating to Thomas Pitt and his family. These three publications, produced independently of one another from different sources, require to be carefully examined and read together in order to form the basis of any coherent and trustworthy representation of the main lines of his career, or any fair estimate of his character. Invaluable as they are, they by no means exhaust the authorities now available for this purpose. Year by year these

have accumulated: and they have recently been supplemented by the publication in the Indian Record Series, of Colonel Love's exhaustive work, *Vestiges of Old Madras,* which besides other additional information on this subject contains a reproduction of the only copy known to be extant of the *Prospect of Fort St George and Plan of the City of Madras Actually Surveyed by Order of the Late Governor Tho. Pitt, Esq.* A copy of this engraving is reproduced in the present work by the permission of Bodley's librarian.

The accumulated contemporary evidence now available affords good grounds for a revision of some depreciatory estimates of Thomas Pitt's character, which have been formed, even by his admirers, on the strength of isolated passages in his very voluminous correspondence, disclosing as this evidence does the circumstances in which the letters containing these passages were written. Neither Wheeler nor Yule had access to the Dropmore papers: and the editor of those papers seems to have had no knowledge of Wheeler's or Yule's researches. No similar extenuation can be pleaded in the case of the German historian, Von Ruville, who in his *Life of Chatham* has taken a very unfavourable view of Pitt's integrity, and has alleged that his wealth was "unrighteously acquired"; that he was "corrupt"; and "a miser in the worst sense of the word"; and that his famous diamond "dominated his every thought and action" for fifteen years. I have dealt with these charges in the concluding chapter of the present work.

The portrait of Pitt is reproduced, by permission, from Lady Russell's *Swallowfield and its Owners*; the print of the Pitt diamond in the various stages of its cutting, and the facsimile of the letter written by Pitt asking for the opinion of Sir Stephen Evans as to the advisability of buying it, have both appeared in the third volume of Hedges' *Diary*, and are here reproduced with the consent of the Hakluyt Society.

I have also to express my grateful thanks to the Rev. A. C. Almack and the Rev. W. H. Cook for the courteous welcome, assistance and information given by them to me on my visits to Blandford St Mary and Stratford under the Castle, for the purpose of verifying facts in connection with Thomas Pitt.

C. N. D.

*May* 1915.

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# CHAPTER I

## THE DORSET PITT FAMILY

DEVON has always taken herself and her worthies more seriously than her more modest, but no less lovable sister Dorset has presumed to do. Devon men are not wont to forget men of their county who have distinguished themselves in history. But it is to be feared that the proportion of the inhabitants of Dorset is small who remember, if they have ever heard, that the Great Commoner and his son, the two most illustrious English statesmen of the eighteenth century, sprang directly from one of the oldest Dorset families. If Thomas Pitt had been a Devon and not a Dorset man, the chances are that his claims to distinction would long ago have received fuller recognition from his fellow county men than they are ever likely now to do. And yet not only was he the most masterly and successful of all the Englishmen who in his day and generation were laying the foundations of the supremacy of his country in India, but he was also the forefather of our two greatest prime ministers. Throughout a long and adventurous life he laboriously and persistently amassed wealth, which he invested in such a manner as to secure for his descendants ready access to Parliament and political influence. But for its aid, it is unlikely that they would ever have emerged from provincial obscurity in the conditions of English political life which then prevailed. A study of what is known

of him reveals points of resemblance between their very remarkable characters and careers and his, and enables us to trace the steps that he took which paved the way for their phenomenal successes. Incidentally it clears up some obscure points in the early history of British India, and discloses the invaluable services which he rendered at a very critical time to his fellow countrymen engaged in the Eastern trade. It also presents curious illustrations of some of our old institutions, and the social life, manners and habits of thought of the times in which he lived, which were very eventful ones. For he was born under the Commonwealth when the first Dutch war was at its height, and he died in the last year of the reign of George the First.

Few families that have produced great men have been more firmly rooted in one county than the Pitts were in Dorset towards the close of the seventeenth century. As far back as the reign of Henry the Eighth, Nicholas Pitt of Blandford and Wimborne had a firm footing there. His grandson, John Pitt, became Clerk of the Exchequer to Queen Elizabeth. He had married a Blandford lady; and their eldest son became Sir William Pitt of Iwerne, Dorset, and Strathfieldsay, Hants; and the bulk of the family property went to him and his descendants. One of the younger sons of this county magnate was Thomas Pitt of Blandford, a physician of repute and the grandfather of Governor Pitt. One son of this country doctor succeeded to his father's practice; another became Mayor of Dorchester; and the third Rector of Blandford St Mary, where Thomas Pitt, the subject of the present work was born on the 5th of July 1653. Blandford was therefore the native town not only of Governor Pitt but of his father, uncle and grandfather. And his ancestors had

possessed landed property there for at least six generations.

Blandford takes its name from its being situate upon what was in olden days one of the chief fords of the River Stour. On one side of the river lies the market town of Blandford, still called Blandford Forum; and on the other, Blandford St Mary, a pleasant country village. The two are joined by a picturesque many arched bridge, which has long ago taken the place of the ancient ford. Governor Pitt seems to have cherished a great affection for the place, which will not surprise those who know it and the surrounding country. One of the first things he did after rising in the world was to buy an estate at Blandford St Mary. It appears from his correspondence that whilst Governor of Fort St George he contemplated buying another estate in the same parish, but being chary of parting with his hard earned gains, and informed by his eldest son, Robert, who was then at home, that £12,000 was asked for it, which was £4000 beyond its value, he abandoned the project. "I would willingly," he says in a letter dated the 5th of February 1709, "have bought Mr Chettel's estate, as being in the parish where I was born, and having an estate there, but at this time of day to buy land too dear is not answerable to common reason and nothing but a good bargain can induce a man to meddle with it[1]." After his final return from India however he bought this estate as appears from a deed in the Dorchester museum, in which it is referred to as having been recently purchased by him.

The Pitt family in those days was a very large one. Governor Pitt's cousins and his uncles and his aunts crop up throughout his correspondence in bewildering multiplicity, the more so because

[1] Dropmore I. 41.

so many of them bore the same Christian names. George seems to have been the favourite name in the elder branch. In the younger there are innumerable Roberts, Johns, Williams and Thomases. From the family tree it would appear that the greater number of these cadets entered one or other of the learned professions, the Church, medicine or the law. One became a Master in Chancery. One, the grandfather of Governor Pitt, as already mentioned was a physician at Blandford; and his practice descended to his son and grandson, the latter of whom was the father of two Dorset clergymen, one of whom was Christopher Pitt, the poet, the literary man of the family, whose claim to fame now mainly rests on the fact that he is to be found in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. Johnson tells us that he "was born in 1699 in Blandford, the son of a physician much esteemed"; that "he was in 1714 received as a scholar into Winchester College, where he was distinguished by exercises of uncommon elegance, and at his removal to New College in 1719, presented to the electors, as the product of his private and voluntary studies, a complete version of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been translated by Rowe." "This," says Johnson, "is an instance of early diligence which well deserves to be recorded." "When he had resided at his college three years, he was presented to the rectory of Pimperne, in Dorsetshire by his relation, Mr Pitt of Strathfieldsea in Hampshire" (the head of the Pitt family), "and resigning his fellowship continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Master of Arts; he then retired to his living, a place very pleasing by its situation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet, where he passed the rest of his life, reverenced for his virtue and beloved

for the softness of his temper and the easiness of his manners. His general benevolence procured general respect; and he passed a life placid and honourable neither too great for the kindness of the low nor too low for the notice of the great." "He left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a stone at Blandford on which is this inscription:

In Memory of
Christopher Pitt. M.A.
very eminent
for his talents in poetry:
and yet more
for the universal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
simplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved,
April 13, 1748,
Aged 48."

His chief poetical work seems to have been a translation of the *Æneid*, which Johnson contrasts with that of Dryden, pronouncing them "the two best translations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the same author." "If the two versions are compared," he says, "perhaps the result would be that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and sprightliness, and Pitt often stops him to contemplate the excellence of a single couplet, that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the langour of a cold and listless perusal; that Pitt pleases the criticks, and Dryden the people; that Pitt is quoted and Dryden read."

It would be difficult to find lives and characters more widely dissimilar than those of this blameless and scholarly poet, and his cousin the Indian adventurer. Of the latter it certainly cannot be said that his life was a placid one; or that he was

"beloved for the softness of his temper." Such "primitive simplicity of manners" as he retained to the day of his death seems to have revealed itself for the most part in the rude bluntness of his painfully plainspoken abuse of the things and persons he disapproved of. These uncontrollable explosions of wrath and disgust, which occur only too persistently throughout his correspondence, and some of which would have done no discredit to the most untutored peasant of his native county, might possibly have been couched in less startling phraseology if, like his cousin the poet, he had been educated at Winchester and Oxford. But there is no reason to suppose that he would ever have been content to devote his energies to mastering the mysteries of dead languages and turning Latin poetry into English verse. That he was fully alive to the advantages of a sound business and political education, and even of a liberal education for those who had any taste for it, is however abundantly clear from the directions which he gave for the guidance of his eldest son and the bringing up of his other children; and from his willingness in after life to pay for the education of the families of his poorer relatives.

It will be gathered from what has already been stated that the immediate ancestors of Governor Pitt were a sound stock of well educated country gentry, most of whom fortunately for themselves had found it necessary to earn their own living, in one or other of the learned professions, for the most part in their own county, unspoilt by idleness or urban luxury. But the members of the family were increasing beyond the opportunities of finding employment for them at home; and when Thomas Pitt, the second son of the Rector of Blandford St Mary was born, the time was coming, when some of them must necessarily seek their fortunes

elsewhere. The Rector had nine children, five of whom survived him; and though passing rich on his income of £100 a year from his country living, he cannot have been able to spend much on the education of any of his children. There is no reason to doubt that his son Thomas during the short time allowed him for the purpose made the best use of such facilities as were available to him of picking up some rudimentary education of a kind likely to be serviceable to him in after life. He certainly learnt how to express himself forcibly and unmistakeably in his mother tongue. Spelling and grammar in those days were very much matters of individual taste with the majority of men and women even of good position. In neither does he fall below the average of the age. If taken to task for his shortcomings in these respects, he might well have retorted as Will Honeycombe did to the Templar[1], that he was above such pedantries, and that he wrote like a gentleman and not like a scholar. He also learnt to pride himself on being a Pitt; and to the end of his life he seems to have had a becoming respect for the head of his clan. His family were all armigeri, a distinction more highly valued in those days by the poorer gentry than it is now that armorial bearings are not only taxed, but assumed without let or hindrance by anyone who cares to use them. That Thomas valued his privileges in this respect may be gathered from the fact that one of his earliest letters, written whilst he was still struggling with adversity in India, is stamped with a roughly executed seal, bearing the shield of the Dorset Pitts.

We may fairly assume that at a very early age he recognised the fact that he had to make his own

[1] *Spectator* 105.

way in the world; and that there was very little chance of his entering any of the professions which had provided a livelihood for his ancestors. He could not hope to succeed to his uncle's practice as a local physician. That would naturally fall in due course to his cousin. It is unlikely that he had any desire to enter the Church. He was better fitted for the law; but his father could not afford to bring him up to that. In the circumstances it is not surprising that he should have chosen as his calling the mercantile marine, then as afterwards a common resource for disposing at an early age of the rough colts of impecunious households. This may have been suggested to him or to his parents by the propinquity of Blandford to Poole, a very flourishing port in those days, to which many a young Dorset lad betook himself, when his home became too hot to hold him. He was in many ways eminently qualified for the sea service. He had throughout his life indomitable courage, great industry and common sense, readiness of resource, a strong constitution and a very determined will of his own. We shall probably not be far wrong in assuming that he spared no pains to make himself a good seaman; but nothing is known of the details of his career until he went out, probably as a mate or in some minor capacity, on board the *Lancaster*, an East Indiaman, under the command of Captain Goodlad in 1673.

His family at Blandford probably considered him exceptionally fortunate in obtaining so early in life an appointment on board so fine a ship in the service of the powerful East India Company, the more so as they must have been just then in straitened circumstances. For his father had died in 1672. It may therefore have been with some consternation that they learnt, when his ship

came back to England, that he had abruptly left her and the service of the Company, whilst she lay at Balasore in the Bay of Bengal. Knowing his ungovernable temper, they may not unreasonably have feared that this catastrophe was the result of a falling out with his captain or some other superior officer. That his employers were disposed to treat his desertion as a grave breach of discipline, and to make a severe example of him is clear from several letters which the Court of the Company sent to their chief officer at Hugli.

In the first of these which is dated the 24th of December 1675, they say, "Wee understand that Captain Goodlad of the Lancaster left there" (at Balasore) "one Pytts, and that he is entertained by our Chief there, as also the Carpenter of the said ship did Leave the Commander, and Wee are informed was prevayled with to do so by our Chief: But whether he had a hand in it or not, Wee do require you to take Care to send them to the Fort" (Fort St George) "to remaine there till next years shipping and then to be sent to England[1]."

Instructions from London took a long time to reach India in those days, and when received were often ignored. It was not until the 18th of December in the following year that the Council at Balasore seem to have taken any action in the matter, as appears from the following entry in the diary of Streynsham Master, the Agent of the Company, who visited Balasore on his tour of inspection of the factories in the Bay. "The Councell," he says, "being acquainted that there was severall Englishmen not in the Company's service in this Towne, some that came trading voyages from the Coast, and others that reside

[1] Hedges 3. 2.

in the Bay, they were all sent for and acquainted with the Honble Company's Orders, that all Englishmen not in the Company's service are to reside at Fort St George or Madraspatam. All the English being withdrawn, the Councell sent for Thomas Pitts and read the Honble Company's Order to send him to England by the first Ships, and required his observance thereto, who promised to comply accordingly."

Five days after this entry at Balasore in Streynsham Master's diary, the Court of the Company in London, having become impatient at the non-arrival of Thomas Pitt in England, wrote again to Hugli, to the effect that if he and the carpenter of the *Lancaster* did not come by the next ships, they would esteem it a contumacy on the part of their officials.

Again a year afterwards, no Thomas Pitt having made his appearance, they sent a further letter to the Bay, in which the following passage occurs. "And for Thomas Pitt we confirme our former order to have him sent home, for goeing out with an intent to stay in the Countrey, or running away from their ship are courses we cannot approve, and will rather at any time send a Seaman from home to you than by our Indulgence encourage such practices[1]."

It is highly improbable that after Streynsham Master had left Balasore, Thomas Pitt kept the promise exacted from him or surrendered himself to the authorities at Fort St George. He certainly was not sent back to England in accordance with the Company's instructions. What he was doing, and why the Chief at Balasore was unwilling to dispense with his services, will appear in due course.

[1] Hedges 3. 3.

His running away from his ship, whether it was, as the Court seemed to have believed, premeditated, or the result of a quarrel with his superior officers, so far from injuring his prospects in life, was the beginning of a career which led to far greater successes than he could have hoped to attain as captain of the finest merchantman that ever sailed the seas.

# CHAPTER II

## EARLY DAYS IN INDIA

In following the career of young Thomas Pitt after he had run away from the *Lancaster* at Balasore, it is necessary to realise the position of the East India Company and its officials at that time. They had very scanty military forces at their disposal and consequently no such power as their successors acquired in after years of dominating the native rulers. They were traders pure and simple in common with other European merchants on the outskirts of the great Indian continent.

At certain points along the coast by the sufferance of the Great Mogul and his local Nawabs, factories for the purposes of trade had been established by the Portuguese, English, French, Danes and Dutch. In some places, *e.g.* at Surat and Hugli, more than one European nationality had its own factory; and in these cases the competing merchants seem to have lived in ordinary times more or less harmoniously with one another, by reason of the common dangers to which they were all exposed. These dangers became at times acute. At Surat, for example, in 1664 during the Presidency of Sir George Oxenden and again in 1670, a Mahratta force under Sivaji, who had risen in rebellion against Aurungzeb, had attacked the town and pillaged the greater part of it, ultimately retiring after doing much mischief, leaving the European factories intact, but carrying off a round sum in rupees extorted from

the European merchants, and what loot they had been able to obtain from the native inhabitants.

The salaries of the servants of the East India Company were ridiculously low. Exclusive of subsistence allowances, they ranged from £5 a year for an apprentice, £10 a writer, and £15 for a factor to £300 a year for a Governor or President. It was not of course supposed that these salaries by themselves would suffice for the personal expenses of the recipients, far less enable them to retire, with large fortunes, as so many of them did, after a few years' service. To supplement them, the Company's officers were allowed to engage on their own account in trade with the interior, or by sea to other Eastern ports than those in which they were stationed. This private trade was supposed to be regulated by Committees of the Company. But its regulation must have been a matter of extreme difficulty, except so far as the exports and imports were conveyed from and to England by the Company's vessels, in which cases only it was possible to check them in London on the ships' departure and arrival. In their private trade with the interior there was of course a great temptation to the Company's servants, as far as their funds or credit enabled them to do so, to take the best bargains for themselves and the less profitable ones for their masters. For the purposes of the sea borne private trade, English seamen, who knew enough of navigation to take command of vessels, manned for the most part by native crews, to Persia, or China, or in times of peace with Holland to Batavia, were naturally in great request, a fact which must have been known to Thomas Pitt, when he stayed behind at Balasore.

Besides their private trade there were other more questionable means by which the Company's

servants enriched themselves when their consciences permitted them to do so. One of the simplest of these was the taking of toll or commission from the native merchants on the sale of the Company's goods, and on the purchase of the Indian merchandise for sending home. Vincent, for example, the Company's chief at Hugli, in whose service Thomas Pitt entered after deserting the *Lancaster*, was alleged by the Court of the Company to have been unfaithful to them in both of these respects. "We are by too many ways," they wrote, "assured that we have been miserably abused by Vincent in the buying of our goods not only in Hugli, But by his complices in all other factories in the Bay, both by selling our Bullion and buying of our goods." "During the time of his chiefship he hath appropriated to his use under pretence of Dustury, or allowance for brokage, or otherwise for keeping the accounts two and a half per cent, which hath been paid to him by the buyers of all our silver and pieces of eight, over and above the severall prices, which he hath brought into account in our books, which amounts to a great some of money. He hath openly and publiquely at Hugly owned this Cheat of Dustury, saying that it was his due." On another occasion they refer to "his abominable sinful forcing of his own tutinack[1] Long Pepper and copper, in lieu of the Company's ready money, while the Company's goods lye unsold in their Warehouses."

Vincent's case was by no means a solitary one. Some[2] years earlier Sir William Langhorne, the Governor of Fort St George, had been recalled because the Court believed as the result of an investigation that he had received annually 20,000

[1] "Tutinack" or "Tutinaghe" is a term applied to two metals (1) a Chinese alloy, sometimes called "white copper," and (2) zinc.
[2] Wheeler I. 89.

pagodas from the Company's chief customer, Casa Verona, in consideration of undue advantages alleged to have been afforded to the latter in reference to the Company's trade. There can be little doubt from the cases recorded in Hedges' *Diary* that similar malpractices on the part of the Company's servants were not infrequent; and the low salaries paid by the Company must have been a direct incentive to indulge in them.

Another fertile but illicit source of gain of which most of the Company's officials availed themselves arose out of their dealings with interlopers, that is to say, such of their own countrymen as came out to the East with the deliberate intention of infringing the monopoly which the Company claimed under their Charters.

The Company had been originally constituted by a Royal Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth, which had been continued by subsequent Charters, the last of which had been granted by Charles the Second in 1661. None of these Charters had been confirmed by Parliament. They purported to give the Company the privilege of trading to the East Indies to the exclusion of all other subjects of the English King. In the early days of the Company when their trade was small and hazardous, this exclusive privilege was not seriously challenged. But after the Restoration and particularly after the repeal in 1663 of the Statute prohibiting the exportation of bullion and foreign coin, the Eastern trade had greatly increased in volume and profits. Owing to the fact that the value of the precious metals was much higher in the East than in Europe[1], there was scarcely any commodity which it was more profitable to carry from Europe to India than silver. And silver had become far more abundant

[1] Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* Book I. Chapter XI.

in Europe of late years owing to its increasing importation from the American mines to Cadiz and Lisbon. The most important article of the export trade from Europe to the East was therefore bullion, which the Company were at this time allowed to export in unlimited quantities. The other exports of the Company seem to have consisted mainly of lead, quicksilver, hardware, woollen cloths, looking glasses, liquors and wines; but the aggregate value of these seldom exceeded one fourth of the bullion and pieces of eight exported. The principal articles brought back to Europe from the East were calicoes and other woven manufactures, raw silks, diamonds and other precious stones, tea, porcelain, pepper, drugs and saltpetre, which was greatly in demand in Europe for the manufacture of gunpowder. The demand for all these had increased in Europe greatly of late years. The Company's business had therefore become an exceedingly profitable one, with the inevitable result that other English traders had become very desirous of taking part in it.

The public feeling in England against monopolies granted by the Crown had been growing steadily for generations; and, as none of the Company's Charters had been confirmed by Parliament, grave doubts had consequently for some time been entertained, whether the Company's monopoly of trade to the East Indies could be maintained in the English courts, and whether any method of legal procedure could safely be relied upon in England against merchants, who infringed it. For years the interlopers had been increasing in numbers and audacity; and hitherto the Company had not ventured to take any action against them in the English courts. They had thought that the safer course was to instruct their servants in India to put down interloping with a strong hand without regard to any questions

of legality. Sir Josiah Child, the Governor of the Company, on being informed by one of his officials that he would do his best in this direction, so far as the laws of England allowed him, wrote back angrily "that he expected his orders should be observed and obeyed as statutes, and that they were to be his (the officer's) rule and not the laws of England, which were a heap of nonsense compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who hardly knew how to make laws for the guidance of their own private families much less for the regulating of companies and foreign commerce." But there were many reasons why the Company's servants objected to comply with these outrageous directions. Apart from other considerations they did not care to run the risk of being called to account by the English Parliament for any outrage they might commit on their fellow countrymen in India, as in later years was done with some of the employés of the Company at St Helena; and as a matter of fact in some of their stations the numbers of their employés were far too small to enable them to cope with the crews of the interloping ships. For the interlopers naturally betook themselves by preference to the outlying factories, where their dealings with the native merchants and the Company's servants were less likely to come under the observation of the Company than in the larger settlements. It was no doubt the duty of the Company's men even in these small stations to discountenance the interlopers. But their suppression could only be effected by force, which seems very rarely to have been resorted to. It would have been strange if it had been. The Company's officials in India might well salve their consciences by the reflection that if force might legally be employed for the purpose of stopping interloping, the right place in which

to employ it was London, where the courts of law could be appealed to by the Company to restrain any interloping ships from leaving an English port, and where the offending crews might be arrested on their return home and dealt with by duly constituted authorities. The suggestion that the difficulty should be met by the scandal of a civil war at the other end of the world must have seemed to them monstrous; particularly having regard to their limited numbers and the fact that they had themselves personally no reason to find fault with the interlopers, who so far from injuring were willing to assist them in every way in their private trade and the carrying from and to England of news and letters and such merchandise as the Company might be unwilling to pass on board their own ships. In these and other ways the interlopers were very serviceable; and the occasional advent of one or more of their ships at such a place as Balasore, for example, must have been very welcome both to the Europeans and the natives. In fact, although the aiding or abetting of interlopers, or the holding of any friendly intercourse whatever with them was regarded by the Court at home as the most heinous and unpardonable sin that any of their servants could commit, and was never referred to in their letters except in terms of the utmost horror and detestation, it was an offence from which scarcely one of their officers was wholly free, and in which a considerable proportion of them habitually indulged with great comfort and pecuniary advantage to themselves.

Such was the condition of things in India which young Thomas Pitt found confronting him when he left his ship at Balasore. It afforded by no means an unpromising outlook for an enterprising and energetic young seaman. But it had its

drawbacks. He had no capital of his own to trade with, and for the next four years, which were probably the most strenuous and exacting of his life, he was at the mercy of his employers, the most important of whom were Matthias Vincent of Hugli, the chief officer of the Company in the Bay of Bengal, and Richard Edwards, the chief of the factory at Balasore, a connexion of Vincent's. If he had displeased either of these men, he might at any moment have been sent back summarily a prisoner to London in accordance with the directions of the Company. It was indeed their duty to send him back however well he might behave to them, for the Company had informed them that they should regard his remaining in India as a contumacy on their part. It was absolutely essential for him therefore to keep on the best possible terms with them and serve them faithfully to the utmost of his ability in whatever capacity they might employ him, on whatever pay they might be willing to give, and however exacting their requirements might be. Both of these men used him in their private trade on voyages to Persia. But at the end of four years' drudgery, his finances were still at a low ebb. He had then bought some Arab horses, a somewhat risky investment, and was in debt to Vincent. On the 21st of February 1678, the latter wrote to Edwards pressing that the horses might be sent to him at Hugli in order that they might go up country to Dacca for sale. A month afterwards he wrote again, asking what Pitt had sold his horses for—"I heare," he said, "that he has agreed to goe to Persia upon Naroola Cawn's ship. Pray when he comes thence hitherward let somebody come with him that may give me timely notice, if he calls not in here, he being between 4000 and 5000 rupees in my debt on all accompts to this day.

Pray take what care you can that he escapes me not."

The following letter[1], the earliest of Thomas Pitt's that is extant, shows how keenly he felt his position when the contents of Vincent's letter were disclosed to him by Edwards; how anxious he was that his horses should not be sent to Dacca for sale; and how he had good reason to fear that after all his efforts for years to please Vincent, the latter was by no means well disposed towards him.

"To the Worshipfull Matthias Vincent, Chiefe for the Affaires of the honourable Company in Bengall and Orixa in Hugly.

Ballasore, May the 11th, 1678.

Worshipful Sr:

Mr Edwards shewed me the clause you writt in your last letter to him which was about the horses. Sr: I am certaine you are sensible what a losse I have and am like to sustaine by them with what I lost in your ship and what Mr Bugden gave away of mine as hee said itt was for the companys interest and allsoe my being putt by (as I was) my imploy which was promised mee, and I depended on itt, not only that butt other inconveniences attended itt, certainely noe one can think butt that this must bee a vast losse to a young beginner as I am. Sr: as for sending the horses to Dacca I am certaine that it will not be for my interest, the Nabob will either take them as a piscash or stop them there till hee brings them to his prices, or this weather and the raines will kill them goeing up, or bring them soe low in case, they will not get itt up in a yeares time. Butt what you write 'you will secure your Selfe and the Companys Interest,' Sr: you may doe as you please, butt I hope you will excuse mee first, being soe much interested in them, and payd soe deare for them. Sr: at your goeing hence you were pleased to promise mee to assist mee in the disposeing of them which I hope you will be pleased to doe. Sr: I have beene formerly advised and since have perceived it that you are much my enemy, butt for what I know nott. I neuer as I can remember disoblidged you in any thing, but allwayes endeavoured as much

[1] Hedges 3. 3.

as possible to the contrary. This of your Antipathy I supposd was caused first by a Jenerall of Mr Rolt to you brought by mee my first Voyage from Persia, as to your money being left behind surely you cannot impute that to any fault of mine, but I suppose that was the onely reason you were soe unwilling that I should proceed on the ship a Second Voyage, or because that Mr Clavell consigned your Concern to mee, which I wish had beene otherwise, rather than have reaped your displeasure by it, butt of late I know there hath beene two persons as have endeavoured (and as it seems effectually) to incense you against mee but I value them nott, but had I beene as forward to have declared what I knew to bee truth of them, as they have beene in telling things to you of mee that have beene false, happily by this time I might have had my revenge of them, and paid them in thiere owne Coyne, but I hope itt is not yett too late, and I will assure them there shall be nothing wanting in mee to complete itt.

Sr: I have sent the Coppy of my accompt with Mr Bugden to Mr Reade to ajust with him. I was unwilling to trouble you, supposing that you are very busy and knowing not how you might take itt, but I hope Sr: you will be pleased to make him give an accompt of the cash hee received of mee, I paying it by your order.

Sr: I humbly beg your pardon for the freedom I take herein, which I thought better soe then doe as some endeavour to, hang men behind their backs, butt speake fair to theire faces, which are like Wolves in Sheepes Clothing, whose ends I hope will be irrecoverable miserable. I doubt not but in time you will finde them out. Heartily wishing you may

I Remaine Worshipfull Sr:

Your most oblidged and most humble servant.

Tho: Pitt."

Irksome and trying as these years of bondage must have been to young Thomas Pitt, the close insight which they gave him into the details of the Eastern trade, and the characters and practices of the native races with whom they brought him into contact, was invaluable to him in after life. In the meanwhile they secured for him the favour of Vincent. Before the close of the year 1679, his prospects had materially improved by his marriage

with Jane Innes, a niece of Vincent and also of Edwards. Writing to Edwards on the 24th of October 1679[1], he addresses him as "uncle" and asks him to dispose of his share in a ship called the *Speedwell*. It seems from this letter that he was then thinking of returning home at once. But a week afterwards on the 30th of the same month in a further letter to Edwards he says, "Since my last to you Mr Vincent and I have discoursed about a Persia Voyage." "The news is here that I have and shall I hope subdue all my enemies." Possibly Vincent had objected at first to his niece's marriage; but had by this time come round. However this may be, the marriage was a most opportune one for Pitt, for from this time forward he enjoyed the fullest confidence of Vincent—a confidence which, as events proved, was not misplaced—and he never afterwards seems to have been short of money or credit—"good working tools" to use an expression in a letter which he wrote when Governor of Fort St George to the father of a young man, who had recently married there, and was a young beginner as he himself had been[2]. "To contribute to their happiness," he wrote on that occasion, "I should advise you to send him out a couple of thousand pounds, or whatever you can conveniently give him to enable him to trade, for a man's youth's the only time to drudge in business, and that which would chiefly contribute to making it a pleasure is to have good working tools, and that generally begets good success." For the future Pitt seems always to have had these good working tools; and they undoubtedly in his case begot good success.

That he went on the voyage to Persia on which Vincent had discoursed with him in October 1679

[1] Hedges 3. 173. [2] Hedges 3. 108.

seems clear, as he is reported to the Court in a letter from the Surat Council to have been in the following year with a "Cargo of Sugars from Bengall" at Muscat, where he fell in with the interloper William Alley, whom he encouraged to go to the Coromandel Coast and the Bay, at the latter of which destinations he would no doubt be serviceable to Vincent. The next year (1681) he came back to England with his wife and infant son on another interloping ship, the *William and John,* carrying a well selected cargo, no inconsiderable portion of which belonged to himself and Vincent, whose relations with the Company had now become strained beyond endurance and who had every reason to set about promptly to get as much of his gains home as he conveniently could. It is not unlikely that before they left Balasore, Pitt and his wife had concerted with him their plan of operations, the execution of which will be narrated in the next chapter.

The following extract[1] from a letter of the Court to Hugli, relating to this ship, makes it clear that whatever Pitt and Vincent had expended on its cargo, brought them in a profitable return.

"With this," they say, "We send the Printed Cargo of the Interloper William and John, and intend to send the Print of her sale, if wee can procure it, to the intent that you may see what kind of new goods she brought, and how they sould here, for your government in providing for us, such as you find turned to best account.

"Upon this occasion wee must tell you that the Interlopers have in nothing juster cause to boast than this, that notwithstanding our Councils are constantly resident upon the place, and have

[1] Hedges 3. 14.

alwaies our orders and money beforehand, and time to Provide new and fine sorts of goods, and they come to the Bay but for a short time and as it were by stealth, and yet they bring home more in proportion of those new desireable goods by far then our ships, which is such an unanswerable reproach to those that mannagd our affairs formerly that wee hope you will remove it from your doors."

# CHAPTER III

## THE INTERLOPERS' TRIUMPH

As has been seen, Thomas Pitt left England for India in 1673 a rough sailor lad of twenty years of age, possessed probably of no more worldly goods than his kit and a very limited supply of pocket money. He returned in the autumn of 1681, a prosperous young merchant of twenty-eight, with a wife and infant son, who in due course became the father of the great Earl of Chatham. Fortunes were made rapidly in India in those days; and the lucky persons who made them usually elected to stay at home to live on them at their ease for the remainder of their lives. But Thomas Pitt had not yet made his pile; and he had pressing work before him on behalf of his wife's uncle Vincent, which had to be taken in hand at once, if that worthy was to be saved from impending disaster. This work, if done promptly and well, would bring grist to young Pitt's mill and ensure for him the future confidence of Vincent. It was so urgent that he can have had but little time to spare for visits to his family in Dorset, where his eldest sister Sarah was now married to the Rev. Henry Willis, who had succeeded her father as Rector of Blandford St Mary, having been presented to the living by the trustees of the will of the late Rector in whom the advowson was vested. But no doubt during the few months that her brother remained in England on this occasion he heard from her and others of his

family, and they from him; and it is not unlikely that they saw something of one another, either in London or at Blandford. Most of his time and thought however must have been devoted to the task of chartering and preparing for sea the ship, with which it had been decided that he should go out to India for the purpose of fetching his patron and employer home with so much of his property as still remained there, and arranging for concerted action with the other interloping ships that might be going out that year. It was already high time that he should start. For the good fortune of the *William and John*, which had brought him home with his wife and son, seems to have been the last straw that broke the back of the patience of the long suffering East India Company, coupled as it was with the suspicion, which must have practically amounted to a certainty, that Vincent had had a hand in that business.

For some time past the Company had been alive to the necessity for a radical change in the administration of their affairs in Bengal[1], where their factories were too far distant from head quarters at Fort St George to be effectually supervised by the Governor and Council of the Fort. They now determined to remedy this defect by constituting a new Agency at Hugli, separate and distinct from that at the Fort, and making its chief the governor and superintendent of their affairs in Bengal with special powers to regulate their subordinate factories in that part of India. For this purpose they had chosen Mr William Hedges, a man whom from their personal knowledge of his character and antecedents they believed that they could trust, so far as they ever trusted any of their servants.

[1] Bruce 2. 466–468.

He was one of their Committees, as the Directors of the Company were then called, and had family connexions on their Court, the most important of whom was Sir Jeremy Sambrooke, whose wife was Mrs Hedges' sister; and he was, as they knew, as keen as they were themselves to put down interloping once for all. The same may probably be said of his colleague, Mr John Beard, the keeper of the Company's Surat warehouse in London, whom they sent out with him as second in the Council at Hugli, and third in the Council of the Bay, and who was nominated as his successor in the event of Hedges' death on the voyage, or within six months afterwards. Neither of the two men appears to have had any previous personal experience of India. With them went Mr John Richards, who was to supersede Edwards, Pitt's other wicked uncle, as chief of the factory at Balasore. It is clear from the peremptory instructions given to Hedges and his colleagues on this occasion that the Court fully realised the importance of promptly arresting Vincent and seizing his papers, before he had any intimation of their intentions concerning him. For the first of these instructions ran as follows[1]. "In the first place wee do require you with all possible speed immediately upon our Agent's arrival in the Bay to seize upon the person of Mr Matthew Vincent, our late Chief in the Bay, and send him forthwith a prisoner on board the ship Defence, Captain Heath, Commander, where lett him remain under safeguard in Charge of the Cap$^{n}$, having all convenient accommodation, but no permission to return on shore in India, on any pretence or cause whatsoever, until he be landed in England, to the End he may be brought hither

[1] Hedges 2. 15.

within the reach of his Majesties laws and according to his Majesties Charter, to answer to the severall breaches of trust and other notorious abuses committed by him."

This instruction was followed by others directing that Vincent's papers, books and effects should be seized and a strict inquiry instituted into "all the abuses frauds and injuries that have been done by him or any other of the factors to the Company, and particularly touching of 2½ per cent. on the Company's bullion or in the price of goods bought or sold for them": and "if it should appear that he or any other person had diverted any of the Company's estate to their own use or made use of the Company's monies or effects to buy goods in their own or other men's names, or that they had taken dustoorie on goods bought or sold for the Company," then every endeavour was to be made "to secure such estate of the Company's, however concealed or disguised under other men's names."

Another of the instructions given by the Court on this occasion was the following. "And for all English in or out of our service, which you shall in any way discover to have any privity, correspondence or intelligence with any of the late Interlopers, we would have you send them home; let not one of these treacherous persons stay in our service, nor remain in India."

In giving this last order, the Company can hardly have realised the extent to which the staff in their factories would have been depleted, had it been literally carried into execution. But that they fully understood that some force would be necessary to enable Hedges and Beard to arrest Vincent, is clear from the fact that they sent with them from England "a corporall and some soldiers to be a guard and assistance to them"; and they

also directed the Council at Fort St George to send them further soldiers for the same purpose.

Armed with these instructions, Hedges[1] after receiving his commission from Sir Josiah Child, the Governor and Thomas Papillon, the Deputy Governor of the Company, left London on the 30th of November 1681 for Deal, where he arrived on the 2nd of December and went on board his ship the *Defence* the following day.

In the meanwhile Thomas Pitt had been left behind in London, where the Company had commenced a suit in Chancery against him and one of his accomplices, who had come home with him in the *William and John*, and on the 15th of February 1682 the Court[2] directed their attorney, Mr Moses, to procure against Pitt a writ of *ne exeat regnum*, as it was called in the ungrammatical law Latin of the day, until this suit should be heard and determined. On the same day however they seem to have discovered that they were too late, and that Pitt had already given them the slip by starting for India in one of the interloping ships he had been preparing. For in their letter to Bengal of that date they say, "We are informed that Mr Pitts is gone for India in the ship 'Crowne,' and we believe will come up Hughly River directly, in hope to get his passage thither before our Agent Hedges (which we hope the Almighty will prevent). If he should appear within your Agency, we would have you secure his person, whatever it cost to the Government or other natives (sic), all which we recommend to the prudent management and good husbandry of our Agent and Council. When you have got him into your custody, be sure to secure him, he being a desperate fellow and one

[1] Hedges I. 15. [2] Hedges 3. 10.

that we fear will not stick at doing any mischief that lies in his power[1]." Two days afterwards they wrote to the captain of one of their own ships the *Welfare*, urging him "to make all imaginable haste" to get before Pitt into the Bay; and after proceeding in company with four other of their ships till they were out of danger from the Algerine Pirates, "to ply your voyage all that possibly you can, and to sail directly for the Bay up the River Ganges, as near to Hughly as you can, without staying at Ballasore for the Agent and Council's orders, but only to take on pilots, so that you may answer our greate designe in preventing the prejudice that may be done us by that ship" (the *Crown*) "or any other Interloper designed for that place."

On the 10th of March they wrote a further letter to the Governor and Council at Fort St George, in which they say, "We hear that there will be two Interlopers this year in the Bay, viz. the 'Crowne,' Captain Dorrell, and '(blank),' Thomas Pitts being designed supercargo of both, who is Mr Vincent's cousin, and a fellow of a haughty, huffying, daring temper, and therefore by the first ship that goes down to the Bay, we would have you send downe to Agent Hedges, a Corporall and 20 soldiers to be at his disposall there, so long as our ship stay, or he shall think fit to keep them there to prevent Interlopers. We think it may not be amiss to have them there to prevent any insolent attempt of Pitts to rescue Vincent, because Pitts being so well acquainted on the River Ganges, may carry up both the ships aforesaid as high as Hughly, whereas we have no ship small enough to go up, but onely the 'Welfare' that is less than either of the others."

[1] Hedges 3. 10, 11.

Pitt left London in the *Crown* somewhere about the middle of February. Hedges, as has been seen, had a good start of him, having gone on board the *Defence* in the Downs on the 2nd of December. Here however the *Defence* waited till the 19th of December, for her consort, the *Resolution*, and what was worse, the two ships were then detained in the Downs by adverse winds till the 28th of January. Then they went quickly down the Channel with a favouring breeze. On the 2nd of February a mishap befel them in the death of the unfortunate man who had been selected to supersede Edwards at Balasore[1]. The following is the official notification of the circumstances attending his decease sent to the Company by Hedges and Beard. "On the 2nd instant it pleased God to take to himself Mr John Richards, occasioned by a slip of his foot in his cabbin 3 nights before, which we apprehend (by ye great effusion of blood out of his mouth & nose before he died) broke something within him. God prepare us all for ye like change."

It may here be remarked that although Hedges and Beard were both religious men, their religion, so far from being a bond of union between them, was according to Hedges, one of the causes of their mutual dislike. On one occasion in the following year Hedges in his *Diary* reports[2]: "Mr Beard took occasion to affront and abuse me in a most rude and unhandsome manner, growing pale with passion, shooke his head and made such a filthy noise with his mouth as cannot be expressed. This prejudice conceived against me, I judge upon account of opinion in Religion, he being a most rigid Presbyterian, is so great that no public business can be freely and calmly argued in Consultation, without ending in a quarrel." "'Tis observable," he writes in another

[1] Hedges I. 16. [2] Hedges I. 149.

place[1], "by ye way that Mr Beard confesses here before the President in Council in a boasting way, that he ordered Mr Braddyl to tell a notorious lye, whereas he always pretends to be more righteous than any other person, and that he would not willingly commit ye least sinne for ye greatest good in the World."

A voyage to India in those days on board a slow sailing East Indiaman must have been a very wearisome business, even with congenial companionship. From the above and other passages in Hedges' *Diary*, it is unlikely that either of the two men derived much solace from the other's society at any time. But Hedges' log of the voyage is not enlivened by any record of the unpleasantnesses that may have arisen between them at this stage of their acquaintance. It consists mainly of a record of the number of miles run by the *Defence* each day, the weather and the ship's course. On the 17th of April, however, the following startling entry occurs in it[2].

> "This morning we saw a sail about 4 leagues to leeward of us; about 5 in ye afternoon we spake with her. She proved to be the Crowne, Capt. Dorrel, Comr., an interloper. She wanted (*i.e.* was rather less than) two months from England. Came not through ye Downes, but went on the Backside of ye Goodwin Sands. They told us plainly they were bound for Hughley. Mr Pitts and two or three passengers more were aboard of her. After saluting each other, we all made ye best of our way, but she sailing best was almost out of sight next morning."

The *Defence* did not reach Balasore Roads till the 19th of July. On his arrival[3] Hedges found three interloping ships there, and was informed by the captains of the two Company's ships which were waiting to take him and Beard up to Hugli, that the

[1] Hedges I. 170. [2] Hedges I. 20. [3] Hedges I. 31.

ship he saw in port was the *Crown*; that she had been there for eleven days; that Pitt had hired a great house at Balasore, carried divers chests of money ashore, and was very busy in buying of goods; that the other two small ships (interlopers) which were in sight over and against Piply were English vessels, arrived but three days before the *Defence*; and that they all wanted pilots to carry them up the river to Hugli.

Fuller details of Pitt's proceedings on his arrival at Balasore are contained in a letter addressed to the Court of the Company by the Council of the Bay[1] in which it is stated that he had entered Balasore in a hostile manner with guards and trumpets, and had spread the report that the Company "were in so low a condition that they could send forth but 2 shipps to fetch off their remaines with not 20 chests of treasure and that there was a new Company erected, and hee the said Pitts was their Agent."

On the 21st of July[2] Hedges and Beard with their families and belongings and nine soldiers left the *Defence* at Balasore and started for Hugli on board of their two sloops. On the 23rd Hedges with his party but without the soldiers, which had been left behind in Beard's sloop, had got up the river as far as a village, called Great Tanna, from which place he despatched a letter, reporting his appointment by the Company as Agent and giving directions for the immediate despatch of boats to carry him and his retinue up to Hugli. These directions were promptly complied with, and on the following morning he was met near the Dutch Garden, some miles below the Company's factory at Hugli, by Vincent "who came[3]," Hedges tells us in his *Diary*, "attended by several boats and budgerows, guarded

[1] Hedges 3. II. [2] Hedges I. 31. [3] Hedges I. 33.

by 35 Firelocks, and about 50 Rashpoots and Peons well armed." "He invited me," Hedges continues, "to go ashoar with him to the Dutch Garden, where he had provided an entertainment for me, and made preparations for my reception. I went along with him, and stayed till evening, expecting Mr Beard's arrivall in the other sloop, who not coming in time, we went together to the Factory and then parted company."

It would be difficult to imagine a more unpleasant and humiliating position than that in which Hedges now found himself. He had been ordered by the Company to arrest Vincent, immediately on his arrival at Hugli; to send him a prisoner on board the *Defence*; to seize his papers, books and effects; and to institute a rigorous examination into the frauds and abuses of which he was believed to be guilty. This was now out of the question; for Vincent had betaken himself with his papers and effects to the Dutch quarters at Hugli, where he was protected by a guard of soldiers in his pay far too strong for Hedges to cope with, even if the Dutch had allowed him to make the attempt. That Vincent had been warned by Pitt of the designs of his enemies against him is clear from the letter of the Council of the Bay to the Company above referred to, in which it is stated that "as soone as he" (Pitt) "came to the Company's late Agent Vincent, Vincent removes to the Dutch Quarter and levies an armed guard of Portuguez firelocks, Rashbootes and Peones." Nor was this all. The Mogul's uncle and Viceroy, Shaista Khan (who is always spoken of in Hedges' *Diary* as the Nabob of Dacca), had for some time past been demanding the payment of customs duties on all goods and treasure imported by the Company in those parts; and all trade with the Company had been interdicted, pending their payment. As the

Company's goods had been expressly exempted from any such duties by a firman of the late Mogul, Shah Jehan, in the year 1656, confirmed by Shaista Khan himself for valuable consideration in 1672, the Company's servants were not unnaturally very unwilling to pay them; and on Hedges' arrival the differences between the native tax collectors and the English had reached a very critical stage. In justice to the native officials it cannot be said that the Company's case for exemption was a very strong one. The firman of 1656 had unquestionably been superseded by a later firman of the present Mogul Aurungzeb, which had imposed a duty of 3½ per cent. on all the Company's goods imported into his dominions; and however unfair it might seem on the Mogul's part to impose such a duty in view of what had been done by his predecessor, his tax collectors had no option but to insist on its payment. The ground on which their right to do so was disputed by the Company's officials was that this later firman seemed to them to apply only to English goods brought into India at Surat[1]. As Sir Henry Yule has pointed out, the firman being in the Persian language was written without stops: and its English translator, who appears to have been an Armenian, by the ingenious insertion of a full stop in the middle of it[2], had enabled an interpretation to be placed upon it, which gave some slight colour to the contention of the English merchants. There seems little doubt that the contention was an untenable one[2]; for no good reason could be alleged

[1] Hedges I. 99, 100.

[2] The firman was addressed to the English rulers at Surat. It ordered certain customs duties to be paid at Surat for the future and at all other places upon this account it directed that no one was to be molested for further customs duties. The Armenian translator inserted his full stop after the word "future" instead of in its proper place after the words "other places." Wilson I. 78.

why, if goods imported from England on the Western Coast of India were made liable to duty, those imported on the Eastern Coast should be duty free. The collectors finding their attempts to collect the duties stubbornly resisted, on a plea which must have seemed to them a bare-faced trick, had no alternative but to refuse to allow the Company's trade to proceed until the duties were paid. "Under all these troubles," to quote again from the last mentioned letter from the Council of the Bay "Pitt comes with three ships" (those Hedges had seen at Ballasore) "to Hughley and lands in great state, with 4 or 5 files of soldiers in red coats, well armed, and great attendance of Native Soldiers and Trumpeters, and takes up his quarters with the Dutch by the name of the New Company's Agent, bespattering the old Company. He treats with the Governor as Agent, obtains a Perwanna order, under the title of the New English Company, to trade, and also liberty to build a factory to continue for ever, and defames the Company's servants. Vincent joining him builds warehouses, the Dutch everywhere assisting them and the Company's black merchants by Vincent's influence."

There is a hiatus in Hedges' *Diary* from the 24th of July 1682, when he records his meeting with Vincent to the 9th of October. On that day he resumes[1]: "The severall affronts insolences and abuses dayly put upon us by Boolchund, our chief customer (causing a generall stoppage of our trade) being grown insufferable, ye Agent and Council for the Honble East India Compy's affaires at Hughly resolved upon and made use of divers expedients for redress of their grievances: but all means proving ineffectual 'twas agreed and concluded in consultation that the only expedient now left was for the Agent to

[1] Hedges I. 33.

go himself in person to the Nabob and Duan at Decca as well to make some settled adjustment concerning ye Customs as to endeavour the preventing Interlopers trading in these parts for ye future: in order to which preparations were ordered to be made."

A more unpromising pilgrimage could hardly have been undertaken. Boolchund and the chief Collector of Customs at Hugli, Paramecvaz Dās, referred to by Hedges in his *Diary* as "Permesuradas," were old cronies of Vincent and the interlopers, with whom for reasons of their own they seem to have acted more or less in concert throughout this business. They had nothing to gain and much to lose by stopping the trade of the interlopers, who paid their customs duties freely and were in far closer touch with the habits and practices of the natives than Hedges or Beard could hope to be. It is not surprising therefore that Hedges found obstacles persistently thrown in his way on his journey to Dacca, and that when he arrived there, the negotiations were protracted by every kind of evasion and excuse. On the 10th of October, to quote from his *Diary*[1], "the Agent with all his retinue, being 23 Englishmen in Souldier's garb and 15 Rashpoots and Peons, embarked on two Budgerows and divers small boats, between 6 and 7 at night, to go towards the English Garden, to which place Permesuradas, contrary to his promise, sent privately divers armed boats to seize some of ours. This night they took one boat laden with 18 half pieces of fine cloth" (intended as a present to the Viceroy) "and carryed it with them so quietly, that we heard not of it till ye next morning. This evening I was followed to ye Garden by Mutoradas, who pretended he was sent by Permesuradas to adjust all differences between us before my departure; and here in ye presence of Mr Bearde and the rest

[1] I. 34.

of ye Council 'twas agreed on and determined betwixt us, that for a present of 2000 Rupees we should have free liberty to receive and send away all our goods, of which he was to accept our entrys without weighing or seeing them, we being obliged at the end of two Months to pay Custom for the said goods, if at that time we did not procure a Pherwanna from the Duan of Decca to excuse us from it[1]." On the following morning the theft of the boat and cloth being discovered, some time was lost before they could be recovered. But by noon the expedition was under weigh again and had got about three or four miles up stream above the English Garden. Here being followed on the banks by horsemen and on the water by boats full of armed men, it came to a standstill, and a message was brought to Hedges beseeching him to return in order that Permesuradas might beg his pardon and threatening that if he did not return, he should not proceed on his voyage without killing some of the Mogul's soldiers; and "what the consequences of that might be," to quote again from the *Diary*, "we were left to consider." Anxious to avoid any such catastrophe, Hedges went back the next morning to the English Garden to consult with Beard, and was assured by the native officials that if he would only stay there that night, Permesuradas should come and cast himself at his feet, begging to be reconciled. When morning came, Permesuradas sent to excuse himself for not making his appearance, and promising that he would not fail to come the next day, which promise, strange to say, he kept; and on his arrival embraced Hedges "with much respect before the spectators"; and the two walked together hand in hand, each of them attended by his soldiers, to the factory. There Permesuradas assured Hedges again of his respect

[1] Hedges I. 34.

and friendship, and promised on leaving that if a servant were sent with him, he would immediately give him a letter to his Master (Boolchund) in Hedges' favour.

Having waited for this letter in vain until 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, Hedges started again on his voyage. "But I had almost forgotten," he writes, "ye unjust and villanous practice used by Permesuradas towards our boatmen. As many as he could take straggling he beat and imprisoned; and those Peons and boatmen he could not take, he sent for their wives and children or other near relations, beating and imprisoning them, that their Husbands and Fathers might leave our service; making also proclamation by beat of Drum throughout the town, that if any slave should run away from us, he should be free and liberty given to go where he or they pleased." "About six o'clock this night," he continues, "we got up to the English Garden, where ye servant I sent for Permesuradas' letter to Bulchund met me, and told me he saw no hope of getting the letter; but was ordered by Permesuradas to tell me that he would have me stay there till he sent to search my boats to see what was in them; and if I refused to stay there, he would certainly stop me again at Tippany some miles further up the river." This was too much for the long-suffering Agent who proceeded on his course, and though followed by an armed boat, got away without further mishap.

It was not until the 25th of October[1] that he and his party reached the Company's factory at Dacca. On the 27th he visited Ray Nundelall, the Viceroy's Duan, who he says "gave me a most courteous reception, rising up and taking me by ye hands and the like at my departure, which I am

[1] Hedges I. 42.

informed is a greater favour than he has ever shown to any Franke." On the 29th he waited on the Viceroy at his Durbar, and was much pleased with the reception accorded him. "When he gave me leave to depart according to their custom," he writes, "he rose up and going away stood still and told me I should go first out of His Presence, which I'm informed is a greater kindness than he has ever shown before to a Christian." On the following day he was still further gratified by the Viceroy's sending him at dinner-time his Chief Cook and Butler with eight or ten dishes of meat with compliments from his own table, which he was also informed was intended for an extraordinary favour. On the 1st of November he sent all his presents to the Durbar; but they came back to the factory, because Ray Nundelall, without whose attendance they could not be given, was indisposed. The next day he had bad news from Hugli, that Rangeran, his Vakeel there "had been clap't into prison by Permesuradas": that "the same day he had been brought forth and slipper'd, ye next day beat on the soles of his feet and the third day chawbuckt[1]: and the fourth day drub'd till he could not speak, and all to force a writing in our names to pay 50,000 rupees for custome of the silver brought out this year."

On the following morning he called on Ray Nundelall to complain of these outrages; but the latter, "being much indisposed at present desired to be excused from the trouble of business. I acquainted his Chief Writer," he says, "with all our concerns, who promised this afternoon to tell them all to his Master."

It was not until three days afterwards that Ray Nundelall was "so well recovered as to be able

[1] *i.e.* flogged.

to go to ye Durbar"; and that Hedges was able to present his humble offerings to the Viceroy, who seems to have been disappointed with them[1], giving him to understand that he did not like so much cloth, and desired rather some rarities which would be more acceptable to him. When the Durbar was over, Hedges sent to ask Ray Nundelall, when he would be pleased to accept his own present, and received the somewhat uncourteous reply, "When he would have it, we should have notice to send it to him." Hedges' Vakeel, Mr James Price, who brought back this message, reported that whilst he was discoursing with Nundelall, a letter had been delivered to the latter from Mr Pitt. That afternoon Hedges called himself on Nundelall, "and discourst him fully concerning Bulchund and his Servant Permesuradas's villainous practices at Hugly. I told him likewise," he adds, "of my desire to have him procure me a new Phyrmaund, to which he returned this short reply 'Your business shall be done for you': and appointed two of his servants to treat with me concerning ye Price and Wording of the Phirman."

For more than a month this sort of thing went on. Hedges had reached Dacca on the 25th of October. On the 3rd of December he produced to the Viceroy's new Duan, who had succeeded Nundelall, "all the Company's old Phirmans and Perwannas for a free trade without payment of custome[2]"; and was informed by the Duan plainly, that "these were once of value: but now signified nothing: that the King" (*i.e.* the present Mogul) "had ordered that if custom were not paid at Surat, it must be paid at Dacca." Four days afterwards, when Hedges protested that such practices would force the Company out of the country, the only reply he got was that they might go when they pleased.

[1] Hedges I. 46, 47.

[2] Hedges I. 53.

In the meantime he seems to have made a silly attempt to mislead the Viceroy with respect to the interlopers. On the 18th of November he says, "I went to ye Nabob, who after a little pause, enquired of me how many ships Mr Pitt had brought into this country, to which I replied four or five. He then asked whether he belonged to ye Company: I answered in the negative. He further demanded, whether it was usuall in this country for private Merchants to trade in these parts that were not of ye Company? I replied No: at which an eminent person stood up, and assured ye Nabob to the contrary, and all I could say would not disswade from that opinion[1]."

In view of the information the Viceroy must have possessed of the number of interloping ships, which had been trading for years past in Bengal, and paying their customs duties, the statement that it was unusual for them to do so was not calculated to impress him with much confidence in Hedges' veracity. On the contrary, it not improbably sowed the seeds of distrust, which led to his outburst of rage in the following year, when he ordered the Agent's Vakeel, James Price, "to begone out of his sight," at the same time expressing his opinion that "the English were a company of base, quarrelling people and foul dealers."

For the present however it suited his purpose to play with his victim and attain his end, which was to secure the payment of the duties and a handsome gratuity for himself by a simple but very effective arrangement. He agreed, as a great concession to the Company, to allow their trade to be resumed, provided that security were at once given him that at the end of seven months the arrears of duty should be paid, if by that time the Mogul's firman for their

[1] Hedges I. 49, 50.

exemption which he would do his best to obtain for them were not procured. Hedges jumped at the offer; and promptly gave the necessary security and undertaking to pay the Viceroy ("the doting old Nabob" as he contemptuously termed him)[1] 20,000 rupees for his trouble in the business and the Court expenses, which it was represented to him the Viceroy would have to pay at Delhi. Whether any such application was ever made to the Mogul may be doubted. Some months afterwards Hedges was notified that it had been made and that it had been unsuccessful, but that there was good reason to hope that if a further payment of 20,000 rupees were made to the Viceroy the firman might after all be obtained. This further payment he made, but with no better result than the former one. The security given for payment of the duties was in due course enforced and all that the Company gained by the negotiations was a short postponement of the date of payment of the customs

[1] Streynsham Master and other predecessors of Hedges knew him better, and spoke with a wholesome dread of his crafty tricks and those of his Duan, by which he had accumulated, Master says*, a vast treasure, "so great a treasure as the like is seldome heard of nowadays, being computed at 38 currores of rupees, each currore is a million sterling, and his income is dayly 2 lack or 200000 rupees, which is above £20000 sterling." Tavernier†, who had sold him many goods and jewels, for which at his own request he was paid in bills of exchange payable at Kasimbazar, because of the danger of carrying silver, found on presenting them that orders had arrived from Shaista not to pay them, unless he would consent to a rebate of 20,000 rupees, being the amount which Shaista declared he had been overcharged. Notwithstanding his exactions, his subjects prospered greatly under his rule. "During his government grain was so cheap that rice sold at the rate of 640 lbs weight for the rupee, to commemorate which event, as he was leaving Dacca, he ordered the Western Gate, through which he departed to be built up and an inscription placed thereon, interdicting any future Governor from opening it, till he had reduced the price of grain to the same rate, in consequence of which injunction the gate remained closed for fifty years." (Stewart's *History of Bengal* p. 323.)

* Hedges 2. 235. † Tavernier 1. 134.

duties and an order from the Viceroy to his officials to send Pitt and Captain Dorrell to Dacca to give security not to use any hostility towards the Mogul's subjects when they had gone out of port. Hedges plumed himself immensely on his cleverness in obtaining this last order. "If they come and appear[1]," he writes, "their voyage will be lost this year. If they abscond and go away, they will be esteemed villaines, and not permitted to come again hereafter." Needless to say, his anticipations were not realised. The interlopers did not comply with the order. "The perwannas[2]," he tells us afterwards, "were compounded with Bulchund and 5 per cent. paid for all their goods, though these men are so shameless as to deny it. I shall not fail," he adds, "to give the Nabob notice of this treachery in his officers." If ever the Viceroy got this notice, it is not unlikely that it afforded him some amusement; for there can be little doubt that his servants were acting throughout this business under his instructions and that he received his full share of the moneys paid to them by the interlopers.

Hedges did not get away from Dacca till the 15th of December[3]. He would probably have stayed on longer, if it had not been absolutely necessary for him to return to Hugli to superintend the getting of the Company's goods on board of their ships before the monsoon, a business for which he was far better qualified by his London experiences than for negotiating with an Eastern potentate and his officials. On the afternoon of the preceding day he had visited the Duan to take his leave of him, "who gave me," he writes, "great hopes of prevailing with ye Nabob to procure us a Phirman, assuring me, twice, he would (God willing) take the first very

[1] Hedges I. 53. [2] Hedges I. 63. [3] Hedges I. 58.

opportunity to acquaint the Nabob with my request, and to inform James Price with ye Nabob's resolution, and for that purpose advised me to leave James Price behind me to take ye Nabob's answer in case my occasions would not permit me to stay for it myself. I replied that ye time was so far spent that ye Honble Compy's occasions would not permit of my longer stay at this place, but I would leave my Vekeel and his present with Mr Pownset at ye English factory and so took my leave of him." On the 6th of January, when he had got back[1] to Hugli, he heard from James Price that the rough draft for the promised application to the Mogul had been completed and that Price had drawn a bill on him for another 20,000 rupees payable at 13 days sight to the Viceroy's Vakeel, which bill Hedges at once accepted. He summarises on this occasion in his *Diary* the advantages which he believed he had gained by his skilful diplomacy. The most important of these was his success in inducing the Viceroy to undertake the procuring of the Mogul's firman which he thinks there is no great doubt he will obtain. "If God gives me life to get this Phirmaund," he writes, "into my possession, the Honble Compy shall never more be troubled with Interlopers. I bless God for this great success I have had beyond all men's expectations in my voyage to Decca."

Having managed to get the Company's goods on board their sloops at Hugli, he went himself with them to Balasore, where the East Indiaman, the *Defence*, went off with them on the 1st of February. The next day, whilst dining at the Bankshill about seven miles from Balasore, he had the pleasure of seeing Dorrell and Pitt pass by in their sloop[2], "with 4 guns and about 30 English seamen to work the vessel and row in ye Crowne's pinnace to tow the

[1] Hedges I. 61, 62. [2] Hedges I. 65, 66.

sloop." The next day the *Crown* and the two other interloping ships sailed out of the road for England.

The rest of the acts of Hedges and all that he did in India after Vincent and Pitt had gone home in the *Crown*; his inquiries into the malpractices of the Company's servants; his quarrels with Beard and Job Charnock, the future founder of Calcutta; his futile attempts to stop interloping, and the peculations of the Company's servants; his supersession by President Gyfford and his ignominious dismissal from the Company's service; his retreat for safety to the very same house in the Dutch Garden at Hugli to which Vincent had betaken himself for refuge two years before; and his final escape on board an interloping ship to Persia; are they not all written in his own wonderful *Diary*, so providentially unearthed by Mr Barlow in manuscript from a book-seller's shop at Canterbury, and subsequently rescued from oblivion by its publication by the Hakluyt Society, with invaluable notes and extracts from unpublished records by Sir Henry Yule, the President of the Society, which have since formed the great storehouse of information to which every student must go who desires information concerning Governor Pitt and the doings of the other East India Company's worthies of his day.

It would have been difficult for the Company to have chosen for the hopeless mission on which he was sent to India a more honest or better meaning or more quaintly ineffective man than poor Hedges. With the best intentions in the world he seems on every occasion of importance to have made more or less a mess of every business that he took in hand. No man could have been less fitted to contend against the wily old fox Vincent and his masterful young coadjutor Pitt, or with the astute Eastern officials, who played upon his vanity and fooled him to the

top of his bent with the most transparent excuses and the most illusory promises. Nor was he more fortunate in his dealings with the Company's officials, who quickly took his measure, questioned the validity of his orders and declined to obey them, at the same time sending home to the Court disparaging letters, one of which written by his colleague Beard, he intercepted, and was so amazed at its contents that he writes[1], "I can scarcely beleeve my own eyes when I read it." He was indeed an unlucky man. Everything he meddled with invariably went wrong. At the same time from the beginning to the end of his unfortunate career in India, he seems to have been always perfectly satisfied with himself, and to have never tired of thanking God for wholly imaginary successes. It was a lucky day for him and for the Company when at last he left the country. How unfeignedly glad was he himself to do so is made clear in his *Diary*. "It has thus pleased God[2]," he writes in January 1685, "to deliver me from the implacable malice of all my enemies, who have taken greater pains to prejudice me by endeavouring to frustrate my voyage to Persia than ever they did to hinder ye Interlopers, whom they have dayly caressed and favored contrary to the Company's express orders upon all occasions." And again a few days later: "I bless my God, ye Creator of Heaven and Earth, who has been graciously pleased to carry me through so many troubles and afflictions of divers kinds, to see this joyful day, maugre all ye Plots and contrivances of my implacable enemies President Gyfford, Agent Beard, Mr Charnock and ye rest of that wicked confederacy, out of whose hands He hath been pleased to give me Deliverance."

[1] Hedges 2. 43.
[2] Hedges 1. 176, 179.

His journey home through Persia, carrying the bones of his dead wife and infant child, which he ultimately buried in a Wiltshire churchyard[1], took him rather more than two years to accomplish. Within three months after reaching England he married a widow. In the following year he was knighted. In 1700 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Lord Mayoralty. This seems to have been his last failure. For he died in 1701.

[1] Hedges 2. 24, 25.

# CHAPTER IV

## A SET BACK TO INTERLOPING

Vincent and Pitt reached London rather earlier than they had been expected to do by the East India Company, who were awaiting their arrival with much interest, looking forward to seeing them brought back ignominiously as prisoners, by Captain Heath in the *Defence*. The Court's news that year from Surat of the success of the measures taken by their officials for the suppression of interloping on the Western Coast of India had been good; and that the Company were confidently hoping to receive equally satisfactory reports from Hedges and Beard is clear from the following extract from their letter to the Bay of the 30th of May 1683[1]. "We understand Pitts arrived at Ballasore some daies before you, but before Vincent could have notice thereof: and considering the Season of Rain at that time, the Soldiers sent you from the Fort and those you carryed, Wee cannot think it was possible for Vincent, Littleton and Pitts, or any other wicked adherents to do us any mischief, before you surprised them, so that by Captain Heath Wee expect you have sent them home in safe Custody according to our orders to you."

"The Wreck of the Interlopers Wee look upon as a just Judgment of God upon their disloyal and unjust proceedings, and that it will have such an effect upon all men's minds here as to convince the

[1] Hedges 3. 12.

Deluded World of the Vanity and Folly of those persons that would persuade them the trade of England in India is to be preserved by any other means than the strict Rules and Discipline of an United Stock governed by a select and authorised Councell: and if you can acquit yourselves as well this present year, as our Servants in other places did the last year, the very name of Interloping must of necessity fall into General Reproach, Ignominy and Contempt."

By this time the Company had at last screwed up their courage to take legal proceedings in the English courts of law for the enforcement of their alleged monopoly of the Eastern trade. They had been advised by counsel that there were three ways by which this might be done[1]. First, by orders from the Court of Admiralty stopping interloping ships from leaving England. Secondly, by actions for damages in the King's Bench. And thirdly by informations in the Crown Office in the King's name, upon which such as were found guilty might be mulcted in fines to the King at the discretion of the judges. They had however, at the same time been warned that the English law would not justify them in seizing the goods or ships of the interlopers on their return home.

The time for action was very opportune. King Charles the Second, who had granted them their last Charter, was in the plenitude of his power. He had dissolved his last Parliament, and for the present saw no necessity to convoke another, so that no question of the Company's right to stop the ships of interlopers from leaving England could be raised in the House of Commons, as was afterwards done in the Redbridge case. Having assured themselves of the King's support, the Court of the Company

[1] Hedges 3. 13.

made a complaint in Council against one Sandys, who had loaded a ship with the avowed intention of trading in the East Indies. The King had ordered his Advocate in the Admiralty Court to stop this ship from sailing, until Sandys had given security that he would not trade within the limits of the Company's Charter. This security Sandys had refused to give; and he had applied to the King's Bench for a prohibition against the order of the Admiralty; but his application was ultimately refused on the ground that no suit was pending in the Admiralty Court in which the King's Bench could intervene.

At this juncture the *Crown* arrived in London; and the Company, though somewhat disconcerted at finding that Vincent and Pitt had returned on board of her, free men and in possession of a valuable cargo, which could not lawfully be seized, proceeded at once against both men by information in the King's name in the Crown Office, with the result that they and Dorrell were arrested, and kept in custody for some days, until they had each given security to the extent of £40,000.

This no doubt was an unexpected blow; and the Court of the Company in their letter[1] to Surat on the 20th of July expressed their opinion that it would make Vincent and Pitt sick of the interloping trade for the future. But its consequences do not seem to have been after all very serious. The fine ultimately imposed on Pitt was only £1000, of which £600 was abated by the Company, and Vincent was knighted by James the Second within the next two years. There can be no doubt that both men made very large profits from their adventure[2]. Mr John Petit, writing to a friend in Surat in the following March, speaking of some persons who had reported

[1] Hedges 3. 13. [2] Hedges 2. 115.

that the interlopers were repressed, says, "As to the interlopers, I have as true news as they. The Crown arrived in London, and sould their goods to great advantage, and noe man durst lay a finger on them, and till they can finde a tricke to confiscate all Interlopers goods, they will finde all their other endeavours vanish into wind."

Young Thomas Pitt was now in a very enviable position. At the early age of thirty he had not only made what in those days must have been regarded as a very considerable fortune, but he had also become a man of mark. During the past year he had been the recognised leader of the interlopers in Bengal; and in that capacity had not only held his own but achieved an unprecedented success, notwithstanding the exceptional measures which the Company had taken with the object of crushing him. His remarkable good fortune due to the intelligence and intrepidity with which Vincent and he had designed and carried out their interloping campaign, coupled with his intimate personal acquaintance with the Eastern traffic, must have brought him into close touch with the very large body of influential London merchants who were interested in interloping and determined to break down the monopoly of the Company at any cost. He and they must have taken the keenest interest in the proceedings pending against Sandys; and have awaited with some anxiety the decision to be shortly given in the King's Bench on the validity of the Company's Charter, which would have a very important bearing not only on the proceedings pending against Pitt and Vincent, but also on the larger question, whether interloping could for the future be carried on with any reasonable hope of success. As has been shown, the Company had succeeded in keeping Sandys' ship in port. Some months before the arrival of the *Crown* in

London, the Court had written out to Fort St George[1], "Sands still continues disquieting himself and us at law to little purpose, while his ship and Goods hath lain at wrack in this River 7 or 8 months, and is never likely to put you to any trouble in India." From a letter written a little later to Surat, it appears that the Company had successfully taken similar proceedings against some twenty-five other interlopers. But they had not yet attained their main desire, which was to obtain a definite pronouncement by the King's Bench of the validity of their Charter. Sandys had failed in his application against the order of the Court of Admiralty by which his ship had been detained. But his application had been dismissed not on the ground that the Company's Charter was valid; but merely because the King's Bench had decided that they had no authority to intervene, as no suit was pending in the Admiralty Court. A legal decision that the Company's Charter was valid could, it would seem, only be obtained by the Company's instituting proceedings in the King's Bench. This they accordingly did by commencing an action against Sandys in that Court for damages. That they entertained good hopes of success is clear from the following extract from their letter to Surat on the 7th of April in the following year. "The litigation between us and Interlopers of the last two years goes on well according to the method of proceedings in the Law of this Kingdom, and have no doubt but the result of all our suits will be to our satisfaction, and we suppose our Adversaries are of the same opinion, the rather because We do not know of any Interloper gone for India this year or designed to goe."

Few cases have at any time created more excitement in the mercantile circles of London than this

[1] Hedges 3. 13

long forgotten action, which is reported in the *State Trials* as "The great case of Monopolies between the East India Company Plaintiffs and Thomas Sandys, Defendant, Whether their Patent for Trading in the East Indies, exclusive of all others, is void[1]." Great pecuniary interests were involved in it, and there being no lack of funds on either side, the most eminent legal talent available was employed to exhaust its ingenuity and learning in discovering reasons for and against the maintenance of the monopoly. The Company had engaged the services of the Attorney-General, Sir Robert Sawyer, the Solicitor-General Finch, afterwards Earl of Nottingham (Swift's "Orator dismal of Nottinghamshire") and the most promising of the young lawyers of the day, John Holt, afterwards Recorder of London and ultimately Lord Chief Justice under William the Third. The counsel for Sandys were Sir George Treby, who had recently incurred the displeasure of the King and been removed from his appointment of Recorder of London, and Pollexfen. Each of these subsequently became Lord Chief Justice. The third counsel for Sandys was Mr William Williams, late Speaker of the House of Commons, who had up to this time been a strong Whig and Exclusionist, but who was afterwards made Solicitor-General and a baronet by James the Second, and who is best known to fame as the leader for the Crown in the trial of the seven bishops. It is reported that the case was argued with great heat on both sides, which is not to be wondered at, seeing that the Company, after smarting for years from the increasing mischief done to their business by the interloping merchants, were now staking their monopoly on the result of the trial, whilst their antagonists, who had so long presumed on immunity in the confident

[1] Cobbett's *State Trials* Vol. 10.

belief that the Company would never dare to proceed against them in the courts of law, were indignant that advantage had at last been taken of a very abnormal political situation to bring the action, which was to be tried before Jeffreys, who had recently been created Lord Chief Justice, and was popularly supposed to be prepared to go any lengths in the direction of stretching the Royal prerogative. Throughout the trial he made contemptuous references to Sandys, and seems to have taken a malicious pleasure in protracting the proceedings and keeping him in suspense. The first hearing came on in the Michaelmas term of 1683, and judgment was not given till the Hilary term of 1685. In April 1684 at the conclusion of the hearings, the Lord Chief Justice asked Sandys' counsel, when he would like to have it argued again, and on the latter suggesting the next term, replied that was a little too soon, and that it had better be put off till the Michaelmas term. "I know," he said, "Mr. Sandys is in very great hurry, but the zeal and transport of any particular person must not think to oblige us to go hand over hand in a case of this great moment." "My Lord," replied Pollexfen, "we shall be well content to stay until the Michaelmas term." "Aye," replied Jeffreys, "I know the Counsel will; but whether your client will or not, I cannot well tell, and do not much care. Well, we will consider of it, and hear another argument in Michaelmas term."

The arguments of counsel and the decisions of the judges in this case were very voluminous. They occupy nearly 200 pages of the *State Trials*, and have long since lost any other than historical interest. For the purposes of the present work a few extracts from them will suffice. The main contention of Holt, who opened the case on behalf of the Company,

so shocked even Lord Campbell, one of his warmest admirers, that while admitting that he fears Holt was not ashamed of it, he pleads in extenuation that if Holt had been at that time on the Bench he would rather have died than have given utterance to it. It must indeed have seemed rather antiquated even in that age. He argued that the King had power to grant the monopoly, because he had control over all trade with foreigners, and particularly over trade with infidels; that the inhabitants of India, being infidels, it was right and proper for the King to exercise great caution in the selection of such of his subjects as might deal with them. "I do conceive," he said, "that by the law of the land no subject of England can trade with infidels without licence from the King or at least it is in the power of the King to prohibit it. And for this very reason, because infidels are by the law taken notice of, and the law hath adjudged them to be perpetual enemies. The law hath set a mark upon them, and they are used as all other enemies are. And so the express words of my Lord Coke in Colvins case. Says he, infidels are perpetual enemies. If a man do beat a man outlawed, a traitor, or a pagan, and they bring an action, he may plead his being a pagan, and an abatement of his action. I mention this, my Lord to shew what an opinion the law hath of these people, judging them to be enemies as they are infidels; and for that reason has excluded them from the benefits of the law and the common justice the Nation affords. And from that it may be inferred that since the law hath excluded them from common justice, surely the law will not allow an intercourse or intimate correspondence with such persons to the subjects of England. And, my Lord, this is grounded upon the care the Government hath, or ought to have by the constitution of the

Government itself, of the Christian religion, which I conceive is the main end of Government. The profession and preservation of Christianity is of so high a nature, that of itself it supersedes all law. If any law is made against any part of the Christian religion, that law is *ipso facto* void. Why ? Because it is made against the prime and original end of government. If the King conquers a Christian country, their law continues until it be altered by the King. But if he conquers a pagan country, the law ceases *ipso facto* to be law, for the law of infidels is contrary and repugnant to the Christian religion. Why then, if the Christian religion have the preference in Christian Countries, there must be some means provided by the law, whereby the King may have the power to preserve it, and there is nothing more dangerous to the right religion, than for the professors of that religion to have commerce with pagans. We read how the children of Israel were perverted from the true religion by converse with the nations round about them in the Book of Judges." "The Government is to take care that there is not an infection by correspondence with infidels. My Lord, it is not to be doubted, but that the King is to have a care of the Christian religion. Why then, my Lord, if this be true, then it is lawful for the King to take care and use his royal authorities to prevent all his subjects from being perverted."

In reply to this argument Sir George Treby contended that the Charter purported to grant a monopoly to the Company and was therefore void. In support of this view he quoted Lord Coke's definition of a monopoly, and also that in the preamble to the Statute of Monopolies, and the Declaration in that Act "That all grants of monopolies and all other matters or things whatsoever, any way

leading to the constituting, erecting, strengthening, furthering or countenancing of monopolies are altogether contrary to the laws of the realm and utterly void and of no effect." "If therefore," he continued, "this trade to the East Indies be a lawful trade, then the patent for restricting of it must be a monopoly. The nature of a monopoly consists in restraining a common right; it appropriates to one or to a few what others had the right of before." He went on to say, "I confess I did a little wonder to hear merchandising to the East Indies objected to as an unlawful trade, and did not expect so much divinity in the argument. Generally speaking, merchandise was always reckoned a lawful trade. Every man might use the sea, and trade with other nations, as freely as he might use the air. And for this trade to the East Indies, it was lawfully used before there was a Company, or else there had never been a Company. At common law no man could be prohibited to exercise his trade, for that is an avoidance of idleness. I do not know a greater property than freedom of trade and labour. The King cannot take away sixpence that a man has got by his trade, much less can he take away his whole trade. If the profit which a man gets by his trade is his own, the liberty by which he acquires it is his own, otherwise the whole property of trade were precarious.

"Where there has been occasion to prohibit any merchandise, it has been done by Act of Parliament.

"I shall now answer Mr Holt's arguments and allegations. First he says that by the law of England, no subject can trade with infidels without the King's license.

"I must deny the law to be so. He cannot find any Statute, judgment or resolution in all our law books to this purpose. All the authority he has is a casual saying of a single judge in Michelburn's case.

To this slender authority I answer. If the law had been according to this conceit, there would have been much said and done about it in other cases. There would have been proceedings against persons that had traded to Grenada (of which the Moors had the dominion 200 years ago), to Barbary, to Turkey, and other infidel places in Asia, Africa and America; but we never heard or read of any till now.

"Secondly. It is an apocryphal case. That book called Brownlow is of little authority. It was printed without the approbation of the judges or any legal licence. And the conceit is of less authority. It is reported as *dictum obiter* upon a motion, a casual saying of the judge, which the clerk took or likely mistook; for it is nowhere said in my lord Coke's own books, though they are voluminous.

"Thirdly. The reason there given makes strongly against the Charter. The reason is lest men should decline from the faith, so that there is it seems a special trust in the King that he should suffer none to go into infidel parts, but such as are orthodox, sound and firm in religion: such of whom the King is specially assured that they will not fall from the faith; which is to be exercised by the King only, and he is to grant licenses to particular and known persons, of whom he has this confidence. The King cannot grant his Royal care to the Company. But now this Charter would have this trust deputed and transferred. For it contains a license not only for the then members of the Company (who were 22 or 23 years ago) but their unknown successors and their sons begotten and to be begotten and their servants, factors, apprentices and licensees."

The same line of argument was adopted and amplified by Pollexfen, who contended at great length that the Charter came within the Statute of Monopolies, and that it produced all the evils and mischiefs

that monopolies did; that it kept up the price of commodities; that it was for the private gain of a few, and to the injury of the many and that it led to the oppression of the people. Dealing with the contention that the Indians were perpetual enemies he added to Sir George Treby's argument the following consideration:

"But because our religions cannot be reconciled, that therefore there should be a partition wall between us, as to property and commerce, perhaps is a Doctrine as irreligious as can be, and does destroy all means of coming to convince and reduce them to the faith. Let a man consider the consequences of this Doctrine. If they are *perpetui inimici* then we may justify killing of them, as those we are in hostility with and justify the taking away what they have from them, as in 17 Elizabeth 4 fol 1314, it is adjudged that a man may seize and take the goods of an alien enemy, wherever he can find them; for it is the prize of his adventure to take them, and of his victory over his enemy, if he have taken him. And 2 Henry 7. 15, if an infidel be an alien enemy then any man may take the goods of any infidel and have them to his own use. And this would be a good trade, if this be so. Any man may kill and beat him if this be so."

Mr Williams, the junior counsel of these two great lawyers, further urged that the grant ought not to have been made by the King except by the advice of Parliament; and that the grant of such Charters, as the Company's, was one of the *ardua regni* which was a subject matter fit and proper for the consideration and deliberation of a Parliament; and ought not to pass without their assent.

These arguments, convincing as they may have seemed to the merchants who heard them, and as they would probably be considered by most persons nowadays, appear to have had very little effect on

Jeffreys and the judges, who sat with him to hear the case. Sir Robert Sawyer, the Attorney-General, and Finch, the Solicitor-General, insisted strongly on the doctrine laid down by Holt that the King's subjects had no right to trade with infidels without the King's license. In support of it the Solicitor-General quoted some ancient cases, in which Jews in England had been unable to enforce the payment of debts due to them from subjects of the King, and an atrocious ancient law, by which if a Christian married a Jew, it was felony and the offending party was to be burnt; and he argued that if the law was so cautious for the safety of religion as to restrain the converse of the King's subjects with infidels in this country, *a fortiori* it would restrain them from trading in an infidel country. Great stress was also laid on the fact that the King could, by a writ of *ne exeat regnum*, restrain any subject from leaving the realm without assigning the cause for so doing; and it was contended that the King's possession of this power fully justified him, notwithstanding the passing of the Statute of Monopolies, in granting valid charters, the effect of which was to exclude all his subjects but those to whom the charters were granted from taking part in any foreign trade.

Two judges sat with Jeffreys on this case. The judgment of one of them, Mr Justice Walcot, has not come down to us; but it is reported to have been practically to the same effect as that of his colleague, Mr Justice Holloway, which has survived. Holloway held that the King by the Common Law had a prerogative to restrain all his subjects from going beyond sea; that he had the controlling power over all trade with infidels, indeed over all foreign trade in general; and that although his subjects might not trade with infidels without his license, yet with his license they might do so, "as the Jews

were prohibited from commerce with other nations, yet Solomon traded with Hiram, King of Tyre, for gold."

Jeffreys' judgment, which seems to have been given a few days before the death of Charles the Second, is unusually long. After premising that it was "a great grace and eminent act of condescension in the King to the defendant, that he had permitted this great point of his prerogative to be disputed in Westminster Hall; but that by this he had sufficiently signified to all his subjects that he would persist in nothing, though it might seem never so much to his advantage, but according to the laws of the land," he endeavoured to prove that the King was invested with this prerogative by the law of the nation, and by ancient usage, because the King might prohibit any of his subjects from going beyond the seas at pleasure, and recall them again as he thought fit, and that without giving any reason. "And here," he said, "by the way I think it not improper to take notice of an objection that was made by the defendant's counsel of the unreasonableness that the King should be entrusted with this prerogative. The very objection seems to carry an unsavoury as well as unreasonable mistrust in a subject to his prince. For it is a maxim in our law that the King can do no wrong, and I am sure the constant practice of our present King has not given us the least umbrage for this diffidence, and I think I may truly say, we are as safe by our prince's own natural inclinations, as we can be by any law in this particular." "And as this is his intention, so certainly it is against his interest to make such grants as the defendant's counsel seems to fear. For it is more for the King's benefit than it can be for his subjects, the greater the importation of foreign commodities is; for from thence arise his own

customs and impositions, those necessary supports of the crown: and therefore in some sense the King is the only person truly concerned in this question; for this island supported itself in many ages without any foreign trade at all, having in it all things necessary for the life of man. 'Terra suis contenta bonis, non indiga mercis,' says the poet. And truly, I think, if at this day most of the East India commodities were absolutely prohibited, though it might be injurious to the profit of some few traders it would not be so to the general of the inhabitants of this realm." "Mr Williams' remark of the difficulty of this case, that it should necessitate the King to call a Parliament to determine this question, is not to be passed without some observation. God be praised, it is in the King's power to call and dissolve Parliaments, when and how he pleases; and he is the only judge of these Ardua Regni, that he should think fit to consult the Parliament about. And Mr Williams would do well to save himself the trouble of advising the King what things are fit for him to consult his Parliament about, until such time as he be thereunto called. But it hath been too much practised at this and other bars in Westminster Hall of late years, to captivate the Lay Gens by lessening the power of the King and advancing, I had almost said, the prerogative of the people; and from hence come the many mischiefs to the King's subjects in parts abroad, by making the power of the King seem so inconsiderable, as though he were a mere Duke of Venice, being absolutely dependent upon his Parliament. Would it not be mightily for the honour and dignity of the crown of England, think ye, that the Emperor of Fez and Morocco or any prince in the remote parts of the world should be told 'That Mr Sandys, one of the King of Great Britain's subjects, came into the Emperor's territories against

his prince's consent, and that he had no power to hinder him, unless he could consult with all his nobles, and the representatives of all his common subjects, to assist therein?' Would not the Emperor believe Sandys to be the greater prince of the two?" "I cannot help being of opinion that this kingdom was in greater regard abroad and the inhabitants more prosperous at home, when the prerogative of the crown was more absolute than it is now. Therefore it is our duty, as good judges as well as good subjects, to endeavour to support it as much as we can by law." He then went at great length into the precedents cited by the Attorney- and Solicitor-General, and proceeded, "Now if the subjects of England had not before this grant, a freedom and liberty to trade to the Indies against the King's royal pleasure, the charter at the bar will be no monopoly within that rule" (*i.e.* the Statute of Monopolies). "Now that they had no such liberty hath been sufficiently proved by the several prohibitions mentioned before; and the many instances thereof cited by Mr Attorney and Mr Solicitor; and it would be very strange, if the King might prohibit foreigners from coming here into England, and not prohibit his own subjects from going into foreign countries. These and the like attempts, if not prevented, will render the King and his government low and despicable in all other parts of the world." "The Indians, being infidels, are by law esteemed common enemies; and the opinion of my Lord Coke in Michelburn's case, I think, therefore to be law, notwithstanding the objections that have been made against it, which none of the books warrant. Now the King by this Charter makes the plaintiffs as it were his ambassadors to concert a peace, and Mr Sandys murmurs because he is not one of them." "This Company was never assailed in Westminster Hall till

this cause at the bar. I cannot therefore help this observation, that as the King by his Charter takes notice, that the charters granted by Queen Elizabeth and King James remained uninterrupted till the late rebellion, so the interlopers against the King's prerogative in this particular, and the horrid conspirators against the King's life in this last hellish conspiracy, first appeared in Westminster Hall at the same time." "So that I conclude the first, and as I conceive the only point in this case, that the letters patent which give license and liberty to the plaintiffs to exercise their sole trade to the Indies within the limits of this grant, exclusive of all others, is a good grant in law. Secondly I do conceive that the defendant's trading to the Indies, contrary to this Charter, may be punished by information at the suit of the King." "Upon the whole matter I am of the same opinion with my brothers; and therefore let the plaintiff take his judgment."

The effect of this decision was not only to recover for the Company the damages they had claimed against Sandys, which amounted to £1000, and to render the result of the proceedings which they had commenced against Vincent and Pitt and a large number of other interlopers a foregone conclusion; but also to stop all interloping ships from leaving London for many years to come. In the meanwhile the only practical action which the London merchants were able to take against the Company, was to continually arouse public opinion against the monopoly; and after the accession of William and Mary to raise in the House of Commons the question of the constitutional right of the King to grant any exclusive rights to the Eastern trade without the assent of Parliament. Their persistent efforts in each of these directions were, as will be seen, ultimately successful.

## CHAPTER V

### TEN YEARS IN ENGLAND

ONE of the consequences of the decision of the King's Bench in Sandys' case was that for ten years after his return from India with Vincent, Thomas Pitt was compelled to refrain from any active participation in further interloping adventures. This enforced abstention from so lucrative and congenial an occupation, in which he had so signally proved his preeminence, may at first have been pain and grief to him, as it doubtlessly was to many other energetic and pushing young seamen of his day. But in his case it had its compensations. He had been very suddenly raised from poverty to affluence, and from hardship and toil to ease and comfort. Wealth had come to him at a time in his life when he could enjoy its advantages to the full, the more so because of the novel experiences which it had opened out to him. Many a young man in similar circumstances, in the prime of his strength and vigour, constrained to settle down to a humdrum life in England, would have felt that his working days were over, that he had got all he wanted, and was fully entitled to spend the remainder of his life in luxurious idleness. For a while Pitt may have felt so. If we may judge from his own account of himself during this period[1], written many years afterwards to his son Robert, he seems to have kept up a very comfortable establishment in

[1] Dropmore I. 24.

London, such as befitted a prosperous merchant, where many of his friends were substantial business men, and where he not infrequently had the pleasure of entertaining his numerous relatives and old acquaintances. "I had a house in London," he says, "which stood me in £120 per annum, kept coach and horses, servants and all answerable, always three or four dishes of meat at my table, as good wine as the world afforded, and plenty, and made my friends and relations very welcome, and had always twelve or fourteen in family. My pocket expenses and all manner of things included, it never exceeded a thousand pounds per annum." Incomes and the cost of living in those days, it is hardly necessary to say, were far smaller than they are now; and a thousand a year then was equivalent to several thousands at the present day. Gregory King, who has been well described as the father of our political arithmeticians, in his *Scheme of the income and expense of the several families in England for the year* 1688, sets down his estimate of the average annual incomes of the most important classes of the community as follows. "Temporal Lords, £2800; Spiritual Lords, £1300; Baronets, £880; Knights, £650; Esquires, £450; Gentlemen, £280; Persons in Office, from £240 to £120; Merchants and Traders by sea, £400; Merchants and Traders by land, £200; Persons in the Law, £140; Clergymen, from £60 to £45; Freeholders, from £84 to £50; Farmers, £44; Persons in Sciences and Liberal Arts, £60; Shopkeepers and Traders, £45; Artisans and Handicraftsmen, £40; Naval Officers, £80; Military Officers, £60; Common Seamen, £20; Labouring people and Out Servants, £15; Cottagers and Paupers, £6. 10*s.*; and Common Soldiers, £14." A young merchant, who in those days could afford to live in London, at the rate of a thousand a year,

must have been an exceptionally fortunate man. After a while he seems to have made his peace with the East India Company, notwithstanding the mischief he had done them, and the heavy expenses to which they had been put in prosecuting him for his misdemeanours. At this stage of his career, it was probably to their interest as well as his that they should be on good terms with one another. The earliest indication of their reconciliation seems to be an entry in the Court Book of the Company of the 16th of November 1687, from which it appears[1] that the Company were "so kind as to abate £600" of the fine of £1000 imposed upon him by the Court of King's Bench "for Interloping within the limits of the Company's Charter and other great misdemeanours committed in the East Indies, wherein he was concerned." In the following year he was admitted to the freedom of the Company without payment of the customary fee.

But he was by no means contented to be a mere city merchant. Year by year after his return to England in common with the vast majority of his fellow countrymen he must have become more and more disgusted with the outrageous proceedings of James the Second. He aspired to take his part in the councils of the nation; and with that end in view applied a considerable portion of his moneys to the purchase of landed property of a kind likely to be serviceable to him in the attainment of this object. In politics he was throughout his life a staunch Whig. Jeffreys' judgment in the Sandys case, which he must have regarded as iniquitous, cannot have inspired him with any great attachment to the Stuart cause. Within a few days of its delivery came the death of Charles the Second. Jeffreys' proceedings in the Bloody Assize a few

[1] Hedges 3. 16.

months later, of the details of which, being a Dorset man, he must have been fully cognisant, and the arbitrary government of James during his short reign, were not calculated to change his political views. In after years he bitterly resented the Tory propensities of his son Robert, and expressed his views with regard to them in no measured terms. Holding the opinions that he did, it is not surprising that he took the most practical means available in those days of supporting the cause which he had espoused. It was fortunate for England that he did so, not merely because of the part which he himself took in the great bloodless revolution, which was brought about by Parliament, when it placed William and Mary on the throne, but also because the political influence which he thus acquired resulted in the unbroken connexion of himself and his descendants with the House of Commons for the next hundred years or more. In 1688 he bought from James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, the manor of Stratford under the Castle, and was returned as member for Old Sarum in the election of the Convention Parliament, and for New Sarum (Salisbury) in the Parliament of 1690[1]. In 1691 he became the owner of the site of Old Sarum, and the votes attached to it, thereby securing the representation of the borough for himself and his heirs. Had this seat not remained in the Pitt family, it is quite possible that his famous grandson, the Great Commoner might never have entered the House of Commons. For it was as member for Old Sarum that he first sat in Parliament. During these years Pitt also bought considerable landed property at Blandford St Mary, and for the remainder of his life, he was constantly buying land whenever a favourable

[1] *Parliamentary History* v. 30, 546, 962.

opportunity presented itself, and he found himself in possession of funds which he could conveniently spare for the purpose.

As capitalist, member of Parliament and country gentleman, his intercourse at this stage of his career with a large circle of acquaintances and friends of all classes in London and the country must have supplemented to a great extent the deficiencies of his early education. He was no longer a mere rough sea captain, with an intimate knowledge of the Eastern trade; but a gentleman of quality, interested not only in the politics of the day, but also in urban and rural pursuits, and able to hold his own in all sorts of society. That he took his duties as member of Parliament seriously may be inferred not only from what we know of his Parliamentary career, but also from the advice which he gave his son Robert from India in 1706[1]. "If you are in Parliament," he writes, "show yourself on all occasions a good Englishman, and a faithful servant to your country. If you aspire to fame in the House, you must make yourself master of its precedents and orders. Avoid faction, and never enter the House prepossessed, but attend diligently to the debate, and vote according to your Conscience and not for any sinister end whatever. I had rather any child of mine want, than have him get his bread by voting in the House of Commons." In those days there was a strong line of demarcation between the landed and the moneyed classes in the House of Commons. Thomas Pitt was in the unique position of being a member of each class.

Apart from the political influence which he had secured by becoming a land owner, he seems to have derived much personal pleasure from the improvement of his estates and particularly from the planting

[1] Dropmore I. 27.

of trees. Indeed forestry appears to have been one of the few hobbies in which he habitually indulged throughout his life. The memorandum which he gave to his son Robert, when he sent him home from Fort St George in charge of the famous Pitt diamond, contains side by side with the strictest injunctions for the preservation and disposal of that priceless jewel, and the most admirable directions for the education of his sons and daughters, the following passage[1]. "When you go into the country, see that my plantations are well looked after and large nurseries full of all sorts of trees, ready to transplant when I come home." In his correspondence he repeatedly recurs to this subject. When his son informs him of the purchase of an additional plot of ground at Old Sarum, he writes[2], "Take care to plant the piece of new ground with as many trees as it will take, and the improvement of which may in time pay for the Vote, and doe the same on my other estates." When he thinks that his son has paid too much for another small holding his comment is, "I observe in Mr Philipp's particulars that Carter's house, barnes, orchard and garden are valued at 22 years purchase, the like never heard of before. To mend this hard bargaine, I would have you to look after the young trees mentioned. Nothing can contribute so much to the retrieving misfortunes, as planting and rayseing nurseries, if hee has the land to doe it on." Whilst cutting down other expenses on another occasion, he makes an exception in favour of this one. "I will have nothing further done," he writes, "but what is necessary to preserve new plantations. Inquire into the gardener's business. Charge him to raise all manner of trees for planting out." And again, "Encourage what you can the planting of timber and disposing of what has come

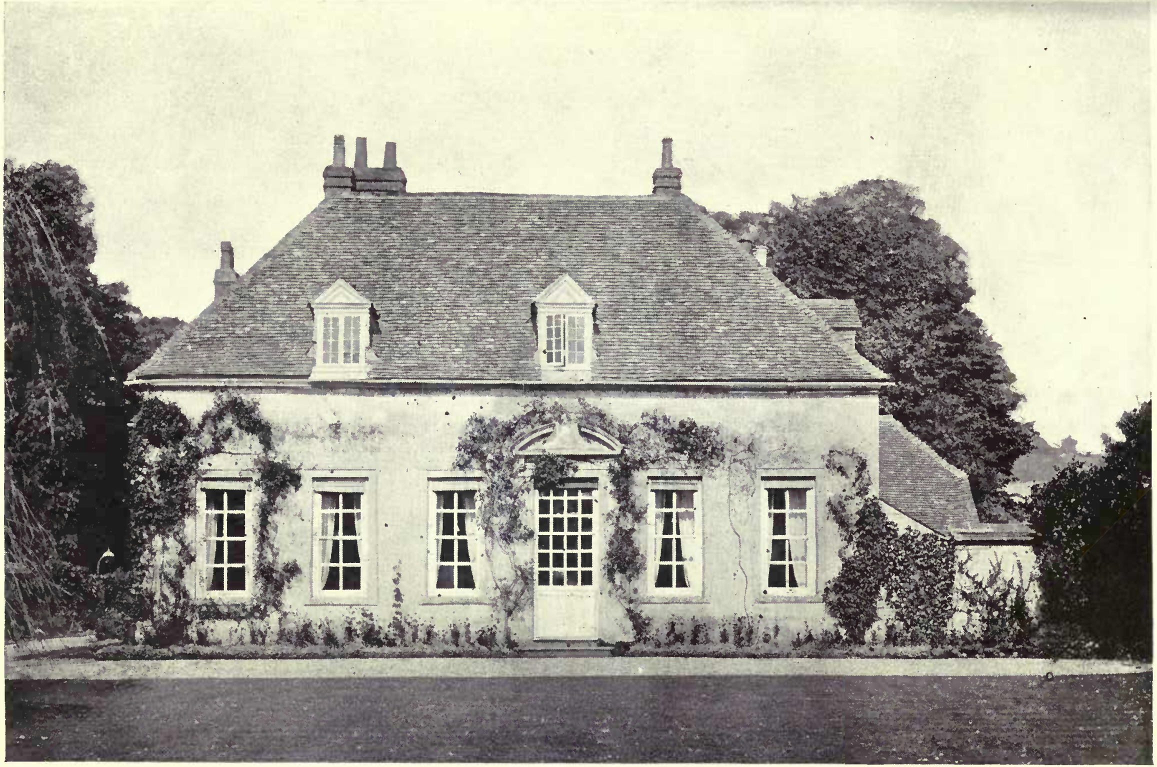
[1] Dropmore I. 5.
[2] Dropmore I. 24.

to maturity to be cut, and the tenants in planting orchards and trees for timber."

It seems indeed as if he had tried his hand at forestry in India, though his first efforts were unsuccessful. His steward, Philips, writes to him from Stratford on the 4th of December 1701[1], "Yours dated Sept 1700 I have now before me, and am sorry the seeds &ca came to nothing. Your Lady will now take Care to send you more from London by this Bearer, and get them put in Bottels, which will save the carrig from hence. As for your Plantations (Thank God) they prosper very well. Wee have planted a Row of Trees in your Meadows on the Bank of the Carrig from my house to the upper end (most Oaks) and we have done the like on Hill Parke Side, a Walke from the Parsonage Barns to the Mills, besides what we have done on the Castle and several other places. We have made a double Walk of Firrs on both side the Long walk, from the House to the River, and cross walks of them between the Fishponds. The two Green plots next the Prebend is allsoe planted with them, and the two little Gardens before the Pigeon house for 2 Groves on each side the House, whereof some of them by the long walk are nere 20 foot high. And most of them raised in your owne Garden by a new experiment of our owne for less than a Crowne charge. And have enough left to plant the top of Old Castle, if you could gett it to be made levell."

This letter seems to have given unwonted satisfaction to Pitt, then grilling in Madras, and his reply to it is for him quite a gracious one[2]. "I received," he says, "yours of the 4th December last, and desire you'l continue to give me the like yearly account of these affairs. I received noe seeds this year, and when you send any it must be in bottles, and the

[1] Hedges 3. 71. [2] Hedges 3. 77.



Mawarden Court, enlarged by Thomas Pitt

*Formerly the Manor House, now the Rectory, of Stratford under the Castle*

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Captain must be desir'd to keep them in the Coolest part of the Ship. I heartily intreat the continuance of your care of my plantations, and that you'l yearly encrease them, and see that my Gard'ner keeps large nurseries of all sorts of Trees by him, that so I may have sufficient to transplant as I shall see occasion, when I come home; I wish you could send some ffir tree seed hither with some advice and directions of what you have newly discover'd in that matter." He concludes the letter by subscribing himself "Your most assured ffriend and obliged humble servant, Tho. Pitt."

Readers of Lord Rosebery's *Early Life and Connections of Chatham*, may remember that this taste for the laying out of land and planting of trees descended to Thomas Pitt's favourite grandson, and that in his case it proved a very expensive and by no means remunerative hobby[1].

Although he had a good town house in London, the improvement and planting of his estates probably led Thomas Pitt to spend much of his time in the country; and he seems to have had every disposition to make himself befitting residences on each of his estates there. He enlarged his manor house at Stratford (Mawarden Court), and when he bought the manor of Blandford St Mary, he pulled down the seat of its former owner, and built a new manor house in its place[2]. He did not care much for an estate without a good house upon it. "Remember," he writes on one occasion from India[3], "to buy no estate, but where there is a good house thrown into the bargain." Country born and bred, he must have inherited a love of rural life, that had come down to him from a long line of ancestors: and his chief ambition seems to have been to found a branch of

[1] Rosebery pp. 307–309.
[2] See Hutchins *History of Dorset*.
[3] Dropmore I. 42.

the Pitt family, not inferior in position to that occupied by the head of the Dorset Pitts, Sir George Pitt of Strathfieldsay. There is good reason to believe that at this period of his life, he would have been contented with the realisation of this desire, had not circumstances arisen that rendered it necessary for him, if he was to maintain the position that he had won, to embark once more on an adventurous career, from which he derived so great an accession of wealth, that the scope of his ambition became thereafter greatly extended.

A clue to these circumstances is to be found in Lord Rosebery's work, above referred to, on page 3 of which the following quotation is given from an intimate family document written in 1781, by Lord Camelford, Thomas Pitt's great-grandson, entitled "Family Characteristics and Anecdotes." "I have heard," Lord Camelford writes in this MS., "but at what period of his life I know not, that having accomplished such a sum as he thought would enable him to pass the remainder of his days in peace, he was taken prisoner together with the greatest part of his effects on his return to England, and released at the intercession of the Duchess of Portsmouth, who was then in France. He went back to India, and made in a shorter time a much larger fortune from the credit he had established and the experience he had acquired."

There is only one period in Thomas Pitt's life at which any such circumstances as are here referred to can have occurred; and that is the time immediately preceding his last interloping expedition to India in 1693. King William's French War began in 1689 and ended in 1697. Pitt started on his last interloping expedition in 1693 and returned in 1695. He was appointed Governor of Fort St George in 1697; and remained in India until 1708; nor did

he ever go back to India after his return to England in that year. From that time onward his career is so well known that there is no period in his subsequent life during which his having been taken prisoner by the French could have passed unnoticed in the records of the time, and in the voluminous correspondence of himself and his friends which has been preserved. On the 30th of June 1689, the English and Dutch fleets had been defeated at Beachy Head, and the command of the Channel was not regained until the victory of La Hogue in 1691. Throughout this war French and English privateers swarmed in the narrow seas preying on the commerce of the two nations. If ever Thomas Pitt was taken prisoner by the French, it must have been during this war. Privateering was a very risky business; and it is known that he took part in it. Letters of marque are still extant[1], which show that he was associated with other merchants in the equipping of at least one privateer, which was to prey on the French ships. He had been brought up as a sailor; and if any reliance is to be placed in the family tradition preserved by Lord Camelford, which is by no means an improbable one, it is not unlikely that he was taken prisoner by the French, whilst serving on board of this or some other English privateer in which he held a heavy stake. There is another circumstance which to some extent supports the tradition that he was taken prisoner by the French about this time. It appears by a letter from the Old East India Company to him on the 23rd of September 1695[2], after his return to England from his last interloping expedition, that he was engaged by the Company in a negotiation for the purchase of one of the Company's ships, the *Edward*, and the cargo of another, the *Princess Anne*

[1] Von Ruville 1. 28. [2] Hedges 3. 32.

*of Denmark*, which had been captured by the French and carried into Brest; and that the Company undertook to recompense him for that service "with the usual encouragement for your pains and care to be taken in that business," words which seem to imply that he had had some previous experience in similar transactions, or that he had acquaintances in France, who might be helpful to him in that line of business. It does not appear that he was successful on this occasion[1]. There is a later entry in the records of the Company in the following year (1696) ordering that the duties payable on 119 pieces of calicoes brought home in their ship, the *Martha*, and consigned to him be remitted to him "in consideration of his pains and charges in *endeavouring* to buy the East India ships and their cargoes, that were taken by the French in the last year." But the fact that he was selected by the Company for this commission is noteworthy in connexion with the family tradition recorded by Lord Camelford.

Had no such serious financial reverse befallen him towards the end of his ten years' residence in England as seems probable not only from that tradition but also from the reference in the inscription on his father's monument to the "utriusque fortunae vices" which he is there recorded to have undergone, what were the motives which induced him, a wealthy member of Parliament, whose political party was then in the ascendant, to throw up his pleasant life in England and to face again the sordid and hazardous hardships and indignities of the interloping trade? The ten years which were then coming to a close were probably the happiest of his life. His health and strength were as yet unimpaired. None of his family troubles had begun. He was on affectionate terms with his wife. His children, of whom he had

[1] Hedges 3. 33.

five, three boys and two girls, had none of them reached an age to give him much anxiety. Living in London in comfortable quarters, a member of Parliament, in an assured position, consulted in matters of difficulty by interloping merchants and possibly on occasion by the East India Company, at a time when the Eastern trade was absorbing the attention of the mercantile community of London, with a fine country house at Stratford and an estate at Blandford, what was more likely than some sudden heavy pecuniary loss to lead him to go back once more to the risky business of interloping, which he had relinquished ten years before, with other youthful escapades?

To realise his position at this stage of his career, it is necessary to bear in mind the relations at that time existing between the Old East India Company, and the strong and influential body of London merchants who had been scheming persistently for years to break down its monopoly of the Eastern trade, and who had now made very substantial progress in that direction. On the accession of William and Mary the struggle between these merchants and the Company had been promptly transferred from the Law Courts to the House of Commons. On the 8th of June 1689, the rival merchants had succeeded in obtaining a vote of censure in the House against the inhuman proceedings of the Company's officials at St Helena and even in excluding some of the worst offenders from the Act of Indemnity passed in that year. Very shortly afterwards they had induced the Government to nominate a Committee to consider the best means of managing the East India trade. The Committee had reported in favour of the formation of a New Company and a New Joint Stock, coupling their recommendation with an expression

of a pious opinion that the Old Company should continue the trade to the exclusion of all others, either interlopers or permission ships until the New Company was established. Before effect could be given to the resolution of the House, adopting this recommendation, Parliament had been dissolved.

An association of merchants had however at once been established for concerted action against the Old Company, and what was practically a New Company had been organised, with a subscribed capital of £180,000, Skinners' Hall in Dowgate having been secured for their headquarters. The vehement struggle in Parliament which had ensued between the Old Company and the New Association had culminated in the Commons' presenting an address to the King on the 6th of February 1692, praying him to dissolve the Old Company, and to issue a Charter to a New Company on such terms as His Majesty might see fit. In reply the King had proposed that the capital of the Old Company valued at £740,000 should be raised by a fresh subscription to 1½ or 2 millions and that the new subscribers should be incorporated with the members of the Old Company under a Charter for twenty-one years. This compromise had been refused by the Old Company; and in February of the following year the Commons presented another address to the King, praying him to dissolve the Old Company after three years' notice. The King had come to no decision on this question before he left London in the following month on his Dutch campaign for that year. Had not war left him little leisure for the consideration of home affairs, and had not Sir Josiah Child persuaded more than one of his most trusted ministers by lavish corruption to espouse the cause of the Old Company, the King would in all probability have insisted on its coming to terms with its opponents

without any further delay. For it was extremely unpopular, and the New Association had the whip hand of it in the House of Commons.

There can be little doubt on which of the two sides Pitt had ranged himself during these proceedings in Parliament and the City; and the fact that he was now on what must have seemed to most persons to be the winning side would not unnaturally have been an inducement to him, if he had been in a strong financial position, to remain in England at this crisis, so as to be able to appropriate his share of the plunder, when the imminent fall of the Old Company took place. On the other hand, if he had recently incurred such heavy losses as Lord Camelford's MS. indicates, the ruin of the Old Company even if it came about at once, would not necessarily be accompanied by any substantial pecuniary gain to himself. For he would have little, if any, capital to invest in the stock of the New Company. A far better chance of retrieving his fortunes would be for him to go out to India, whilst there was still time, on another interloping expedition, if he could get his friends to back him. Neither he nor they were likely to have any scruples as to the propriety of such an adventure. A year or two afterwards, when some reflections were made on his character, he wrote with conscious pride[1], "And for the Supporting my Creditt, I dont remember I was indebted or concerned in anything whatever that could be censur'd by any, unless it was interlopeing, which I have never repented of to this day." Nor had he any reason to do so. No discredit attached in England to the interloping trade. The public opinion of the day was strongly on its side. It was not even clear at this time that it was illegal. In the late reign of James the Second, three years after Jeffreys' extraordinary

[1] Hedges 3. 29.

judgment in Sandys' case, the refusal of the King's Bench in the case of the Merchant Adventurers *v.* Rebowe[1] to enforce a monopoly to trade with Holland or Brabant, granted by the King without the confirmation of Parliament, had left the Company no leg to stand upon, but the ridiculous doctrine that in a trade monopoly a distinction could be drawn between trade with Christians and infidels. If the question of the validity of the Company's Charter had at this time been brought before the courts, there can be little doubt what the result would have been. This being the case, Pitt, the most successful interloper of the day could have had little difficulty in finding backers in the members of the New Dowgate Association, who apart from the large profits they might reasonably hope to obtain from the adventure, must have realised that at this juncture nothing was more likely to force the hand of the Old Company than a successful resumption of the interloping trade. A fine vessel was accordingly fitted out by them for this purpose, on which Pitt started for India in the month of April 1693 on his last interloping expedition.

[1] *Modern Reports* 3. 126.

## CHAPTER VI

### PITT'S LAST INTERLOPING ADVENTURE

THE earliest contemporary record of Pitt's last interloping expedition which has survived, seems to be the following entry in Luttrell's *Historical Relation of State Affairs*. "1st April 1693. On Thursday an extraordinary Council at Kensington, where was a great hearing before his majestie between the East India Company and Capt Gifford and Capt Pitts, two interlopers. The Company prest to have the interlopers hindered from going to sea, alledging it would be detrimental to the Company by their informing the Indians of the state of their concerns, and to obviate the objection of the interlopers charge to fitt out this to sea will send the ship to sea on the Companies account. And after a long debate left to be determined among themselves."

So far as appears from this entry, the main reason put forward on behalf of the Company for stopping the expedition was their desire that the natives of India should be kept in the dark with respect to the imminent danger of dissolution, which threatened the Company in England; and with this object the Company were willing to pay any expenses which might have been incurred by the adventurers in fitting out the expedition, to take over the ship and cargo which had been provided, and send it out themselves on their own account. It would appear that the King was unwilling to intervene in the matter, either by putting pressure

on the adventurers to agree to this proposal, or by taking any steps to prevent them from going to sea. He apparently did not hold the strong view of the heinousness of interloping which was entertained by the Company, or share their opinion as to the importance of concealing in India what had passed in the English Parliament. It would have been strange if he had done so. The Company were not popular in England, and there was no good reason why he should go out of his way to make himself more unpopular than he was already, by espousing their cause. Moreover, they had rejected his recent recommendation for a compromise. It is also quite possible that he was aware of the fact that the interlopers had always been on good terms with his Dutch subjects in Bengal and had made the Dutch quarter of Hugli their headquarters on more than one occasion. On the following day he left England for his campaign against the French.

His decision that the Old Company and their opponents should settle their own differences among themselves failed to bring about any immediate settlement, as might have been expected; and the interloping ship, the *Seymore*, set sail without any further attempt to stop her. From the Court's letter to their Agent, Job Charnock, of the 28th of April 1693, it would seem that two Orders in Council had been obtained, permitting the interlopers to prosecute their voyage to Madeira, and that authentic copies of these orders were enclosed in it by the Court. From this letter it appears that Captain William Gifford, who had attended the Council at Kensington, was commander of the ship, and Thomas Pitt and Mr Allen Catchpole the supercargoes. "Wee are very much disposed," the Court tell Charnock, "to frustrate her Voyage, whatever it costs, wel knowing nothing to be done in India without money. Mr Pitts

and Catchpole will make a great huffing and swaggering, if they arrive there as they did formerly, but you have a good guard of soldiers about you, and if they prove faithful you need not fear any great shows they will make there, not that Wee would have blood shed, but Wee would not have you outlooked or Triumphed over as Pitts did formerly over Mr Beard, who wanting the Language of the Country could not work so secretly with the great men in Bengall, as you may doe that have such perfect knowledge of their Language and Methods in all respects[1]." In this letter Charnock is authorised to give Mutoradas[2], who it may be remembered was in Hedges' day an assistant of the wicked Permesuradas, and was now apparently the Company's chief customer in those parts, "for his expences and for the assistance of his ffriends at Dacca a present of four or ffive thousand pounds, as you shall see cause when the Business is done to your Content. In the mean time give him a Positive assurance of it, and buy as many Goods of him as he can furnish you with, tho' they lye by you or him in Godownes Untill our next Ships arrive with you, and he have his money for them." "We would have no force used on our side, but all things to be done with Wisdom and Money except the Interlopers offer any force against the natives our Allyes, and in such Case we would have you give order to our Captains and officers by force to rescue any of our Allyes, their Ships, Effects or Persons out of their hands. And if there be occasion upon this Conjunction to increase the number of your Peons or Topass Souldiers Wee would not have you Stick at that charge nor any other, tho' not herein particularly mentioned, to prevent and defeat this Interlopers Voyage." "We dyrect this Letter only to your Self that you so keep

[1] Hedges I. 17. [2] See page 37.

it, or show it to your Councill if you think fitt: but you must conclude you have some false Brethren, as well as Mr Beard had."

In following the course of the struggle which ensued between Pitt and his colleague Catchpole on the one side and the officials of the Old East India Company on the other, and contrasting it with that in which Pitt had been engaged ten years before, when he came out in the *Crown* to rescue Vincent and his property from the vengeance of the Company, we must remember that on both occasions our main information is derived from his opponents, and that we have no statements by Pitt himself of what occurred to go upon, except casual references in letters written long afterwards. It is also necessary to bear in mind the changes which time had brought about in the circumstances of the two contending parties. On the former occasion Pitt, who is described by the Court of the Company "as a desperate young fellow of a haughty, huffing daring temper that would not stick at doing any mischief to them that lay in his power," in disregard and, it may almost be said, in defiance of the legal proceedings that had been instituted against him by the Company, had come out to India in command of a lawless expedition with the express object of saving Vincent from being arrested and brought to justice for alleged malpractices of which there can be little doubt that he had been guilty. Pitt had not only succeeded in accomplishing this object, but in doing so had incidentally made large gains from very successful interloping operations. Now, a well-known Member of Parliament, and a country gentleman, at the mature age of forty, without any attempt at concealment, he was coming out to the old haunts and happy hunting grounds of his youth, with the knowledge and tacit consent of the King, on a peaceful

enterprise for the furtherance of a trade which a few months later was expressly declared by the House of Commons to be one in which every English subject had an equal right to engage unless prohibited by Act of Parliament[1]. In the meantime, whilst his position had so materially improved, that of the Company had been steadily deteriorating; and was now so hopelessly discredited in England that the main object of the Company in frustrating his voyage was to prevent their difficulties at home from being made known to the natives of India. There also the fortunes of the Company had been undergoing a still more serious change for the worse, mainly owing to the disastrous policy adopted by Sir John Child, the President of Surat and General of their affairs in India, with the support and approval of his brother Sir Josiah, the Governor of the Company at home. For years before this new policy had been adopted, the Company had persistently discouraged the fortification of their Indian settlements, and had exhorted their servants to rely rather on the firmans they could obtain from the Mogul and the local rulers than on forts or garrisons. At length, exasperated by what they regarded as the unreasonable and vexatious exactions of the Mogul and his officers, they had determined to wage war against him, with ludicrously inadequate forces and most lamentable consequences[2]. On the Western Coast of India many of their factories had been seized and looted. Sir John Child had evacuated Surat and betaken himself for safety to Bombay. In Bengal their prosperous factories at Dacca, Patna and Maulda had been sequestrated and their factors imprisoned. Then Kasimbazar had been surrounded

[1] Resolution of the House of Commons in the *Redbridge* Case, 19th January 1694.

[2] Hunter 2. 240.

by an armed force, which had extorted money from the merchants, plundered the factories and besieged the English residents. Charnock, the Company's Agent had with difficulty succeeded in making his escape from the town and reaching Hugli. But the English factory there was soon surrounded with another hostile force; and the English were not only denied the necessities of trade, but forbidden to purchase victuals at the bazaar or to send their soldiers thither for supplies. The disregard of this order brought about a general fight, in which the native troops were beaten off[1]. Protracted negotiations followed ending in the retreat of the English in their boats to what was then a deserted spot, the site of the present Calcutta, some seven and twenty miles lower down the river, accessible at high tide to the Company's ships. There they had been again attacked, and compelled to take refuge on board their ships and continue their retreat to the river's mouth, and the fever-haunted creeks of Hijili. Nor even there were they allowed to remain unmolested; but were followed up by a native army 12,000 strong, which cut off their supplies and again invested them, until Charnock having buried 200 of his men capitulated with the remainder, 100 of whom were sick and wounded, and rather less than 100 able to bear arms. On their submission he and his surviving companions were contemptuously allowed the choice of remaining where they were or returning to Hugli. They did neither; but went back to the Calcutta site and endeavoured to found a settlement there; but were all taken off some months afterwards by Captain Heath to Fort St George where they remained till peace had been proclaimed by the Mogul in 1690, on the ignominious terms appearing in the following firman sent by him

[1] Wilson I. 93–125.

to the Government at Bombay[1]. "All the English having made a most humble submissive Petition, that the ill crimes they have done may be pardoned, and requested a noble Phirman, to make their being forgiven manifest, and sent their vacqueel to the heavenly palace, the most illustrious in the world, to get the royal favour: Ettimatt Caun, the Governor of Surat's Petition to the famous court equal to the sky being arrived, that they would present the Great King with a fine of 150,000 rupees to his noble treasury, resembling the sun, and would restore the merchants' goods they took away with them, and would walk by the ancient customs of the Port, and behave themselves for the future no more in such a shameful manner: Therefore his Majesty, according to his daily favours to all the people of the world, hath pardoned their faults, mercifully forgiving them out of his princely condescensions agrees that the present be put into the treasury of the Port: the goods of the merchants returned: the town flourishing: and they follow their trade as in former times: and that Mr Child who did the disgrace be turned out and expelled. This order is irreversible."

It would have been a bitter pill to Sir Josiah if he had been forced to recall his brother in accordance with this edict. Fortunately for both, the poor man had conveniently died shortly before it reached Bombay. Notwithstanding their heavy losses and humiliations the Company had got off more cheaply than they could reasonably have expected to do. That they were allowed at this stage of their career to remain in India at all, instead of being one and all summarily expelled bag and baggage, as a warning to the European merchants of other nationalities, was probably due to two considerations, one the

[1] Stewart's *History of Bengal* p. 541.

advantages derived by the natives from their trade, and the other the apprehension of the Mogul's officers that if they were turned out, their ships might take to inflicting by way of reprisal injuries on the native coast trade and particularly on the Mecca route on the Western Coast.

On the conclusion of this inglorious peace Charnock had gone back, with such of his fugitive companions as survived, to Calcutta (Chuttannuttee, as it was then termed) with a guard of 43 soldiers, and set to work on the malarious river bank in the midst of swamps and on what was then one of the unhealthiest spots in a most fatal climate, to found his new settlement, destined to become the capital of India[1]. Such mud hovels as had been built there during his former stay had been burnt; and he and his men had been forced to live in their boats and tents whilst others were being erected. To Elihu Yale, the benefactor of Yale University, who was then Governor of Fort St George, the selection of this spot for a settlement seemed simple midsummer madness. In a letter written to the Company on the 25th of May 1691, he describes Charnock and his companions as "living in a wild unsettled condition at Chittannuttee, neither fortifyed houses nor goe-downs, only Tents, hulks and boats, with the strange charge of nearly 100 soldiers, guardships &ca, for no business and a doubtful foundation, wholly depending on the good Nabob's stay and word, the King's promised phyrmand not being yet sent them from Surratt." A few months later, the 2nd of November 1691, he complains bitterly of Charnock's still remaining there, and that he will not attend to the request to send his soldiers back to Bombay, instead of keeping them with him "where they are of great charge and can be of little service being in a

[1] Hunter 2. 269.

defenceless place at Chuttannuttee, where he continues contrary to all reason or consent of the Government" (*i.e.* the Native rulers) "who will neither permit building a factory, nor merchants to settle or trade with them; but offer him a more convenient place for it, two miles below Hughley, but that he will not hear of, supposed to proceed from his feares of being seized by some of the Government, his irreconcilable enemies; and for his better security he has bought a great Portuguez frigett for a guardship, and this without our order consent or knowledge; and what he means by this and his other expenciveness we understand not[1]." But though Yale could not, Charnock did, by bitter experience, understand the danger of again putting the Company's neck into the noose at Hugli[2], or anywhere else at a distance from the sea, out of reach of the protection of their ships, and he was not to be tempted to go back to Hugli, even by the perwanna[3] which the Viceroy and his Duan had issued exempting the English from any customs duties beyond a fixed sum of 3000 rupees a year. He had recognised the admirable position of Chuttannuttee for trade purposes, and was determined to stick to it at any cost. Little by little things improved there. Trade was started, and he was able to send home one ship, though with an incomplete cargo. But before the Company's directions with reference to Pitt's interloping expedition reached him, he had died worn out with age and infirmities and the difficulties of the almost superhuman task which he had undertaken. Had he been living when the letter arrived, it would have been anything but congenial to him to interrupt the arduous and all-absorbing work

[1] Hedges 2. 87, 88. [2] Wilson 1. 142.
[3] A copy of this perwanna will be found in Stewart's *History of Bengal* p. 542.

on which he was engaged, for a costly and probably futile attempt to frustrate the success of Pitt's adventure. He had never in more prosperous times, if we may believe Hedges, been very keen on the suppression of interlopers; and it may readily be believed that his melancholy experiences of the last three or four years had not stimulated his energies in this direction. Had it been left to him to determine, he might well have been disposed to let the interlopers alone on this occasion. But he was dead and gone, and Sir John Goldsborough, who had lately come out as Commissary General and Chief Governor of the Company's affairs in the East of India, was at Chuttannuttee, engaged when the Company's letter arrived on a long report finding fault with all that poor Charnock had done, blackening his memory, and setting forth the steps he was himself taking to rectify his supposed mistakes. One of the achievements for which Goldsborough had taken great credit to himself in this document was the cutting down the expenses of the 40 soldiers whom Charnock had left behind him, which number he had reduced to 23, "including a drummer and two sergeants," with the stipulation that when the factory was built, their numbers should be further reduced by one half[1]. He had also told the paymaster that the soldiers were to understand that for the future they were to receive only four rupees each a month; and that if "they would not serve for that, they might go where they will." In view of the Court's instructions in their letter to Charnock, which had now come to hand, that if he had occasion to increase the number of his soldiers, he was not to stick at that charge or any other that was in his opinion necessary to prevent and defeat the interlopers' voyage, Goldsborough must, one would think,

[1] Hedges 2. 92.

have felt some regret at this premature reduction of the insignificant military force under his command.

The *Seymore*, it appears, arrived at Balasore on the 1st of October 1693, and before proceeding further, Pitt wrote to him on the 22nd of that month a letter the purport of which may be gathered from the following reply to it dated the 1st of November[1].

"Sir, By Mr Wilcoks I received yours from Ballasore of the 22nd of 8ber on the 30th Do, in which you have written much about the H. E. India Company my Masters, and twice in it threatened me with your divulging their circumstances, if you are obstructed in your way, as if I was to be frighted thereby to a conferance with you, which if the H. C. have seen fit to have lett you into their interest here, they would have ordered me to doe it by you, and you would have gladly been the messenger thereof to me.

But to come close to the matter, it is well known to you that I am the H. C. Chiefe Servant in these Eastern Parts of the World, Commissioned by them under the King of Englands Charter, by which the trade of these countreys is granted to them and their successors, exclusive to all other the Kings subjects, but whome they reduce thereto.

Therefore if you have any power either from their Majesties the King and Queen of England, or from their East India Company, to come and trade in these parts, show it to me and I will readily obey it, and that will more convince than all you can write or say, but in case you refuse and doe not give me such Authentick Satisfaction as the nature of the Thing requires, then you are to knowe that I must still take it for Granted that you have noe such power, but are come hither Either a piroting or at the best a Interloping, and I shall deale with you accordingly, and I doe hereby protest and declare against you and all your adherents, that you are guilty of all the Evil that shall or doth arise thereby.

J. Goldsborough."

The insulting and monstrous suggestion in this letter that Pitt was a pirate and would be dealt with accordingly was no doubt indefensible. But in other respects the letter was a justifiably plain statement of the course which the writer found himself bound

[1] Hedges 3. 20.

in duty to pursue with respect to interloping captains. About a fortnight earlier, however, Goldsborough had written another letter to Ibrahim Khan, the Viceroy who had succeeded Shaista Khan, which it is more difficult to defend. In it he endeavours[1] to persuade the Viceroy that the late war which the Company had declared against the Mogul had been brought about by the interlopers. "May it please your Highness," he had written, "it is about a month since I had the Honour to give your Highness an account of my arrivall in these parts, occasioned by the King's Husbolhockem to his Duan Kaffait Caun for to stop the three European Nations trade, upon which I gave your Highness an account of the cause thereof, that it was occationed by ill men that were ill willers to Government, and that in most kingdomes there were such, and that it was from them that Interlopers and pirots infested these seas, and your Highness remembers the war and many differences and troubles some 4 or 5 years past which fell between your people and ours here in Bengall, which was began and occationed by Interlopers, who are such as I have above mentioned....Now may it please your Highness I have notice from our ffactors Residing at Ballasore that about 8 daies past arrived in that Road an Interloping Ship. ...Further in the ship is come one of those very men named Thos Pitt that were here formerly upon the very same Interloping Account, whoe was one of them that Layde the foundation of the unhappy differences before mentioned and may doe the like agen, if your Highness doth not prevent him by not permitting him to trade in these parts. I doe therefore humbly intreat your Highness to Consider the many Evills that may Ensue if such men be permitted to trade, when due notice is given that they are

[1] Hedges 3. 19.

Interlopers, which may be prevented if your Highness in great wisdome shall think fitt to issue forth your Commands....This very Thos Pitt is the man that about 11 years past did by some sinister Insinuation obtain a Perwanna from the Nabob Shasta Caune to build a factorie at Hugly, and upon his returne to England had great trouble, and hath been by the Government there detained from ever Returning hither, but Europe being afflicted with extream Warrs he hath now gott some Opportunitie to Escape from thence once more with Effects and such as himselfe."

If this letter was unjustifiable, still more so was the reply sent to Goldsborough by Mr Eyre, the Company's representative at Dacca, who had been entrusted with the duty of handing it to Ibrahim Khan. "If your Excellency thinks it convenient," he says in it, "I will acquaint the Nabob and Duan that these Strangers that Steale out of their owne Countrey in this nature are generally those people that rob and plunder on the Seas, and under pretence of being Merchants and comeing to trade doe abundance of mischief to the King and his Subjects, and that 'tis more than probable this Ship may be one of these. This will soe surprise the Nabob and Duan that 'tis thought they will order their persons and effects to be seized."

It is to be hoped that Goldsborough did not approve of this atrocious proposal, the result of which, if it had been successful, might have been the summary hanging of Pitt and his crew as pirates on their arrival at Hugli. But if Eyre told the Viceroy any such unscrupulous lie, it is clear that no credence was attached to it by the Viceroy. Nor was there any likelihood that it would be believed. It was on record that Shaista Khan had issued perwannas permitting the interlopers to trade with the natives,

and had granted Pitt himself permission to build a factory at Hugli. There had been no unpleasantnesses of any kind between the native rulers or merchants and the interlopers. The latter had paid their customs duties without question. The difficulties that had arisen between the Company and the native Government had been caused by the refusal of the Company's servants to pay these duties, and the inevitable friction that had ensued with the Viceroy's tax collectors. This must have been so well known to the Viceroy and his Duan that it is surprising that Goldsborough and Eyre should have made any attempt to deceive them on the point, particularly as Pitt was prepared to come to Hugli and pay his duties there, whilst the Company's servants still declined to do this, and were remaining at Chuttannuttee without the permission of the Viceroy for the obvious purpose of evading his tax collectors.

Three days after his letter to Pitt, Goldsborough wrote to the Council at Surat[1], "Wee are Extreamly Sickly here this Season, boath Natives and English, but I hope God will restore us all." This hope was not realised, for he died at Chuttannuttee before the end of the month. The mortality of the settlers there for some years to come was awful. That the site was not abandoned, is an example of what dangers men will persistently face where large profits are to be made by trade. Writing of the place some years afterwards, when it had already become a prosperous trading centre, Alexander Hamilton, who from 1688 to 1723 was engaged in the Eastern trade, in his *New Account of the East Indies* says of it, "One year I was there, and there were reckoned in August about 1200 English, some military, some servants to the Company, some private

[1] Hedges 2. 160.

merchants residing in the town, and some seamen, belonging to shipping lying at the town; and before the beginning of January there were 460 burials registered in the clerk's book of mortality." For years it had so bad a reputation that it was nicknamed by seamen Golgotha.

Immediately on hearing of the arrival of Pitt's ship the *Seymore* at Balasore, Goldsborough had ordered his right-hand man and confidant, Captain Dorrell, commander of one of the East Indiamen then in the Bay to do his best[1] to arrest Pitt and any of his men that he could catch and to stop them from coming up the river to Hugli. He had also despatched Dorrell to the native Governor of Hugli, hearing that the latter "was fitting his boat to fetch Pitt from Kendua up the river," "with orders to lett him know that if he gave any entertainment or countenance to Pitt or his people, or suffered the Merchants to trade with him or them, it would bring about another war, and that we" (*i.e.* the Company's servants) "would stop Tom Pitt on the river from Coming up, and that if by land he did get to Hugli, we would fetch him from thence." "Upon this the Governor of Hugly," Goldsborough writes, "seemed to be afraid and promised he would give him no Countenance or Entertainment, nor the merchants should not trade with him, and if Tom Pitt came to Hugly, he would deliver him up to us." Notwithstanding these promises, it is certain that Pitt and his men got up to Hugli safely, with their belongings, that they were never delivered up to their opponents, and that no attempt was made by the Governor to prevent the native merchants from trading with them.

On Goldsborough's death it was found that he had nominated Eyre to be the Agent at Chuttannuttee, an arrangement to which the Court at home

[1] Hedges 3. 18, 20, 21.

afterwards took exception. Eyre's selection to the post may have been due to the favourable impression he had made on Goldsborough by his proposal to get Pitt arrested as a pirate, or to the fact that Charnock on his deathbed had left him out of the list of the men whom he had thought fit to succeed him[1]. Eyre was recalled from Dacca and took command at Chuttannuttee on the 24th of January 1694.

On the 16th of April 1694, in a letter to Sir John Gayer at Bombay, he admits the utter failure of all his attempts to frustrate the interlopers' adventure. "Notwithstanding all our endeavours[2]," he writes, "with the Nabob and Duan to frustrate and oppose the Interlopers in their designs, they are rather countenanced and encouraged by the whole Country in generall, and living in Hughley (24 miles higher in the Countrey than we), will have greatly the advantage of us in both buying and selling, but especially in buying all other goods for ready money, which all Merchants bring thither, being the Port Towne. They have given out Dadney[3] to Merchants, who formerly dealt with us to the amount of Rupees 300,000 by the connivance of the Governor of Hughley, to whom they have presented (as we are informed) Rupees 4000."

During the year that Tom Pitt remained at Hugli on this occasion he must have driven a roaring trade. Some years before, Streynsham Master, when Governor of Fort St George, had described the town as "the Key or Scale of Bengal, where all goods pass in and out to and from all parts." It had been made the residence of the Chief and Council of Bengal for this reason, and because "being near the center of the Company's business, it was commodious for

[1] Wilson I. 144.
[2] Hedges 3. 22.
[3] *i.e.* money advanced to weavers and the like, by those whom they are to supply with goods.

receiving advices from and issuing orders to the subordinate factories[1]." Vincent was the first Chief there; and whatever his irregularities may have been, the Company's trade under his management had flourished and grown with unprecedented rapidity. In 1675 the Company's stock allotted to Bengal was £65,000[2]. In 1683 when Hedges[3] was sent out to arrest Vincent it had grown to £230,000. Now for some years past the Company's trade with Bengal had languished owing to the late war, and the destruction of the factories. All that was needed to enable it to revive, was a capable chief with ample means at his disposal. Pitt fulfilled both these requirements. By long experience he was intimately acquainted with all the details and tricks of the trade and its possibilities; and he had besides a personal knowledge of the leading native merchants and officials. The same may be said of his colleague, Allen Catchpole, who had served as factor in the Company's factories at Patna, Kasimbazar and Hugli[4]; and had been dismissed owing to a quarrel with Charnock. These two men were now in a position to purchase unlimited quantities of the same kind of goods that had yielded such handsome returns in the past and were now for sale at rates which must have been considerably reduced by the recent withdrawal of the greater part of the Company's custom. Nor did they lack the assistance of some of their compatriots in India. During their residence at Hugli, the place seems to have become a veritable cave of Adullam, to which any Anglo-Indian who was in trouble or in debt or discontented with the Company, betook himself. Three such men, John Hill, Edmund Hussey and William Messenger were carried home to England by Pitt the next year, in spite of warrants

[1] Hedges 2. 236.
[2] Wilson 1. 58.
[3] Hedges 1. 2.
[4] Hedges 2. 110.

ordering them to present themselves at Fort St George, and the protests lodged with Pitt by the Council of Bengal. One of these men, Messenger, very nearly brought about a fight between the interlopers and Eyre's men, as appears from the following extract from a letter sent by Eyre to the Court.

"The 15th of August we thought it very opportunely to putt in Execution a warrant we had received from Fort St George concerning one Messenger, who had unlawfully taken possession of a house next adjoyning to the Interlopers and in order thereunto wee sent our Sergeant with 20 men, souldiers and seamen to Hugley to seize his person, and take charge of the house, for we had heard he had taken the Interlopers protection; and our main designe in sending so many men was to Interrupt their business and trade by Scaring the Government and making them believe there was Something Intended against Pitts person, that thereby it might be entered in the Waacka or Gazett to the Nabob and Duan that our intentions were to oppose Pitt by force, which in all probability would have putt a Stop to their proceedings, for neither the Nabob nor the Duan would have given them any Countenance, or permitted them to trade, had such a Story been entered in the Waacka that Wee designed Quarrell, for this the Duan was all along afraid of, and prevented him from giving them a Perwanna sooner....On the Serjant's first arrival with soe many men it putt the whole Citty into a Consternation, and Messenger was Seiz'd and the house taken possession of without the least opposition, but as he was coming to us with a Guard on their way as they Passed by the Interloping Shipp several Musquet Balls were fired at them from the said Shipp, and the boat hailed on board, and followed with their Shipps pinnace with Men in Arms (as your Honours will perceive more at large by the

Guards Depositions in our Diary month August) on advice whereof we delivered them a protest by two of your Honours servants and sent Mr Cornell up with 32 seamen more to Joyne with the Serjant and men already at Hugley, in case of any Violence that might be offer'd by them in retaking the House, for they had threatened to oppose us by force, and had about 40 men in Arms in their house to Command as they should see Occasion and in a small time we received their Answer with a reprotest[1]."

This appears to have been the last of Eyre's abortive attempts to induce the native authorities to discountenance the trade of Pitt and Catchpole. It is characteristic of the man that he should have imagined that the Nabob and his Duan at Dacca, both of whom had been apprised of the critical position of the Company, would be intimidated by the news that this slender force of soldiers had come to the Mogul's garrison town of Hugli with the avowed object of arresting Pitt and the interlopers, and had ignominiously retreated because they had not dared to carry their project into execution. In after years Pitt seems to have cherished no resentment against Eyre for his conduct on this occasion, or for his attempt to get him hung as a pirate[2]. Writing when Governor of Fort St George to Beard, Eyre's successor at Chuttannuttee in March 1701, he says, " Sir Charles was very jolly and merry here, though I find him strongly inclined to be wretchedly covetous. Soe once taking him in a good humour wee got a hundred pagodas out of him for the Church." If Eyre had known of the agreement which had been come to in England between the Company and Pitt's copartners, he might have been inclined to let Pitt alone at Hugli. He had not apparently then received the Court's letter of the 3rd of January in that year,

[1] Hedges 3. 22. [2] Hedges 3. 66.

informing him of this settlement. The Company were now interested as much as, if not more than Pitt himself in the success of the interlopers. On the 2nd of February 1694, they had written to Fort St George[1]: "The Concern in the two Ships sent out by the Interlopers, being now by bargain with most of the interessed become so our own, We have thought good to give you notice thereof, to the end that whatever remains of their Cargoes, or may yet be left ashore, may be carefully looked after, befreinded and sent home into the joynt interessed, with whom we have a good understanding here." The next month they wrote again to Eyre and his Council: "If Mr Pitts be not yet despatch't give him your assistance that he may come with our next Ship, the Company having a great concerne in him, as we formerly advised you."

He seems to have started for England early in 1695. The Bengal Council write on the 19th of January of that year to the Court[2]: "Captain Pitts, being still in Bengall, wee offered him our assistance in recovering what debts he may have made since his arrivall, and that wee could take care of any Concerne or effects he should leave behind him in the Countrey, according to your Honours' directions." In the same letter they say: "Captain Pitts to the last made a great bounceing, and have carried himself very haughtily ever since his arrivall in these parts, and has not scrupled to talk very disrespectfully and uncivilly of your Honours, and to carry home in his ship, Mr Jno. Hill, Edward Hussey and William Messenger, persons whome we had warrants from Madras to send thither, notwithstanding the protest was Delivered to him for Damages your Honours might accrew thereby."

[1] Hedges 3. 31. [2] Hedges 3. 32.

## CHAPTER VII

### APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF FORT ST GEORGE

THOMAS PITT cannot have got back to London, and given up the command of his last interloping expedition before the autumn of 1695. Two years afterwards he was appointed by the East India Company Governor of Fort St George. In considering the reasons for his selection by the Company to this important post, and the motives which induced him to accept the appointment, it is necessary to realise the position of the two parties, and the circumstances which drew them together.

There can be little doubt that the settlement to which the Company had come with the principal owners of his ship, the *Seymore*, had been due to some extent to the very serious crisis into which the Company's affairs at home had drifted towards the end of 1693. Their charter had suddenly lapsed owing to the failure, accidental or designed, of one of their officials to pay within the prescribed time the tax imposed by Parliament on their stock. Parliament was not sitting when this catastrophe occurred. The Company having decided that it was absolutely necessary to obtain a new charter at once and at any cost, Sir Josiah Child and his kinsman Sir Thomas Cook by unprecedently lavish bribes to some of the King's principal ministers and other influential persons, had succeeded in obtaining a regrant to the Company of its monopoly in the Eastern trade, without waiting for the sanction of

Parliament. Nor was this all. Notwithstanding the likelihood that their proceedings would be called in question, when Parliament met, they had placed such reliance on the support which they expected to receive from the distinguished personages, whose services they had bought, that they very imprudently ventured to do what the King himself had declined to allow them to do when Pitt's interloping ship had sailed. They had applied for and obtained an Order in Council authorising the detention in the Port of London of an interloping ship, the *Redbridge*, in the same manner as they had stopped Sandys' ship ten years before. Parliament had met some weeks later; and the question of the legality of this order and the grant of the new Charter had at once been raised in the House of Commons by means of a petition presented to the House by several merchants and others concerned in the detained vessel. This petition had been referred to a Committee of the House, who reported on the 8th of January 1694, that "it was their opinion that the stopping of the ship was a grievance, a discouragement of trade and contrary to the known laws of the Kingdom." Apparently this report was not strong enough for the Commons, who desired a more definite pronouncement and resolved on a division by 171 to 123 that the matter be recommitted to a Committee of the whole House, who were also to report on the new Charter. On the 19th of January the Committee of the whole House reported that "in their opinion all subjects of England had an equal right to trade in the East Indies unless prohibited by Act of Parliament." And the House at once confirmed this report by a resolution to that effect.

The Company's letter to their Council in Bengal, announcing their agreement with the principal

owners of the *Seymore*, is dated the 3rd of January when the first of these Committees was sitting. To what extent in coming to this settlement the Company were actuated by a desire to placate some of their Parliamentary opponents, their fear that the adventure would shortly be declared by Parliament to be a lawful one, or their anxiety to share in its profits, is uncertain. But there can be little doubt that the critical position, in which they found themselves, had considerable influence on their decision. Serious as that position became by the resolution of the House of Commons, it had grown still worse before Pitt got back to London. It had seemed to their enemies inconceivable that the King's ministers should have granted the new Charter to the Company without receiving very ample consideration for so doing; and early in the following year with the object of ascertaining the details of this corruption, they had succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons to examine the books of the Company. This Committee had reported that it appeared from the Company's accounts for the year 1693, when the Charter had been obtained, that more than £80,000 had been expended under the head of special services; that Sir Thomas Cook, the then Governor of the Company, whom Sir Josiah Child had opportunely left in office to bear the brunt of his opponents' attacks, had not been called upon by his colleagues for any details in respect of this expenditure; and that the only explanation of it which the Committee had been able to obtain from him was that there were great persons whom it had been necessary to gratify. Cook, on being asked in the House who had got the money, refused to answer the question. He was committed to the Tower; and a Bill was promptly brought in and

passed by the Commons, providing that if before a specified date, he did not furnish them with this information, he should refund the whole of the £80,000 himself to the Company, pay a fine of £20,000 to the Crown and be declared incapable of holding any further office. When the Bill reached the Lords a compromise was effected, and it was arranged that the investigation should be conducted by a Joint Committee of the two Houses; that Cook should be indemnified, if he made to them a full and true disclosure, but that until he did so, he should remain in the Tower. This disclosure in due course he made with the result that the Duke of Leeds, the King's Chief Minister, was disgraced and impeached by the Commons.

When Pitt returned to England in the autumn of 1695 the Company were therefore in great discredit. Their Charter was practically a dead letter. The resolution of the House of Commons had left it open to any interloper to engage in the Eastern trade with impunity; and had made it more than ever clear that an Act of Parliament would be required before any effective new Charter could be granted, either to the Company or to their opponents. It remained to be seen which of the two parties would in the light of day be prepared to pay the Government the higher price for it, or on what terms the two would unite, and what conditions Parliament would impose on any Joint Company that might be formed. These questions had not been settled before Pitt was appointed Governor of Fort St George.

During the intervening two years he had ample time to consider on which of the two sides he should range himself. He had in the first place to settle up his accounts with the Company, of whom he was reported by the Bengal Council to have spoken so

"disrespectfully and uncivilly." We shall probably not be wrong in assuming that this business was completed not only to his own satisfaction but also to that of the Company. For shortly afterwards he was employed by them to negotiate terms for the redemption of the *Edward*, the sister ship of the interloping *Seymore*, which had also been purchased by the Company, and had had the misfortune to be captured by the French and carried into Brest[1]. A further proof of the friendly footing on which he stood with the Company is to be found in an entry of the Court Book in the following year of the appointment on his recommendation of his nephew, Mr Thomas Curgenven, as factor to the Company in Bengal. This young man was the son of the Rev. Thomas Curgenven, the Rector of Folke in Dorset, who had previously been the Head Master of the Blandford Free School and subsequently of Sherborne School, and had married Thomas Pitt's sister, Dorothy. It is clear from his correspondence that Pitt had a high regard for this gentleman, whom he consulted in after years in matters connected with the education of his children and made at one time during his absence in India their joint guardian with his cousin George Pitt, the head of the family.

He seems to have got on admirably from the first with Sir Thomas Cook the Governor of the Company, who was afterwards responsible for his appointment as Governor of Fort St George, and remained his firm friend for life. In 1705 Pitt in a warm letter expresses his obligations to him, "which[2]," he says, "neither time nor distance can make me forget."

What his relations at this time were with the opponents of the Company, it is difficult to determine.

[1] Hedges 3. 33. [2] Hedges 3. 97.

In the interests of such of them as had backed him in his late interloping adventure, and had come to an agreement to write the capital they had risked into the Company's stock, it had presumably been his first duty on his return home to act as far as possible in harmony with the Company's officials. On the other hand he had probably up to that time been on the side of the Dowgate Association. When and in what circumstances he came to break with them is not recorded. If he had approved of their plans and been allowed to take a leading part in the execution of them, his services might have been invaluable. But if, as is not improbable, the Association had already determined to adopt the mistaken policy which they afterwards pursued, he must have strongly disapproved of it in the interests of the English trade in India. And if this was the case, being the man he was, it imposes no strain on the imagination to suspect that he denounced it in terms which gave great offence to its advocates. One of the most important members of the Association, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, seems to have been as stiff-backed and masterful a gentleman as Pitt himself was; and was now flushed with his recent successes. For he had been one of the principal owners of the *Redbridge*; and had played an important part in the Parliamentary contest, which had ended so disastrously for the Company. In after years he was one of Thomas Pitt's most implacable enemies. It is not unlikely that both aspired to the leadership of the Association, and that serious differences of opinion arose between them. According to Pitt's estimate of his own character, he was not a difficult person to get on with. "Those who have known me longest[1]," he writes in one of his letters to a

[1] Hedges 3. 78.

friend, "must say that twas never my temper to be quarrelling and jangling." Those who have read his correspondence will not be disposed to endorse this opinion without some reserve. Like Sir Anthony Absolute he may have been compliance itself, when he was not thwarted, no one more easily led when he had his own way. But when he could not get his own way, he could be very insolent and exasperating. Heathcote seems to have been a somewhat similar character; and the rupture that ensued between the two men may have been inevitable from the first. They were never reconciled. When Pitt was Governor of Fort St George, and Heathcote one of the most influential members of the Court of the United Company, Dubois, the diplomatic Secretary of the Company, did his best to bring about better relations between them. Writing to Pitt in 1705, he says[1]: "Sir Gilbert Heathcote showed me your letter to him with some sort of warmth as if you treated him wrong. I wish you would please to write to him a little smoother. He and his family have a very large stock, and seem to bend their heads to the business, and one brother or other of them will always be of the Managers." But placability to his opponents was not one of Pitt's attributes; and he was not the man to be induced to write submissively to his old foe. Two years afterwards another of his friends, Captain Harrison, informs him[2], "Sir Gilbert is the Sovereign of the New Company, and holds great sway in the City. The snake in the grass is jealousy of power. Sir Gilbert is your mortal enemy, and will omit no opportunity to affront you." It was Heathcote and his party who ultimately succeeded in bringing Pitt's Governorship to an untimely end.

[1] Dropmore I. 14. [2] Dropmore I. 31.

But although it is easy to understand that Pitt and Heathcote may have fallen out with one another at this stage of their careers, it must have been something more than mere personal animosity that induced the former to accept the Governorship of Madras. He was now well on in middle age. He knew how fatal a climate India was then to Europeans. He had ample means, a safe seat in Parliament, and two country estates, to each of which he was much attached. Writing to his son Robert some years after this, he gives as one of his reasons for going out to India again, his desire to benefit his children and to found a county family. "What have I fateagued for[1]," he writes, "after this manner, and lived soe many years in exile from my country and friends (I had enough to subsist on, and that very handsomely too) but to make my children easy in their circumstances and mee happy in their company; and having by God's blessing acquired such a competency as I never expected or could hope for soe as I should have been able to establish a family as considerable as any of the name except our kinsman G. P." (George Pitt of Strathfieldsay), "and now to have all blasted by an infamous wife and children. It is such a shock as man never mett with." It is quite likely that one of his ambitions was to found a county family. But in writing for the purpose of upbraiding his eldest son, who would be the head of such a family, for the part he had taken in the family quarrels, his father may well have been inclined to lay greater stress on this motive than the facts of the case may have strictly warranted. To enable him to found a county family, it can hardly have been necessary for him to go out to India at this juncture. Now that the Company's monopoly was gone, he might probably,

[1] Dropmore I. 23.

with his knowledge and experience of the Eastern trade, have made as much money and as quickly in comfort and security at home as he was likely to make as Governor of Fort St George. The motives of men who have come to momentous decisions at critical stages of their lives have usually been composite, made up of a variety of impulses, good, bad and indifferent. Is it unreasonable to suspect that one of the impulses by which Pitt was actuated on this occasion was patriotism? It is clear from many incidents in his career, and many passages in his correspondence, that he was a true patriot, proud of his country, jealous of her interests and honour, and willing to spend himself in her service. The fortunes of his country in India were at this time very seriously imperilled by the disastrous mistakes of the Court of the Company. The English in India, as he had lately seen, were in imminent danger of losing their last precarious foothold in Bengal; and if on his return to London he found the Dowgate Association committed to what would of necessity be an internecine conflict between the few remaining English settlements in the East, and a fresh influx of inexperienced and bigoted rivals, he may well have made up his mind to do his utmost to avert the inevitable consequences of such an infatuated policy. He himself was a strong man, confident of his own powers, and he had never yet failed in his Indian ventures. Is it not fair to him to suggest that much the same thought may have occurred to him as that to which his famous grandson gave utterance in after years, "I know my country can be saved, and that I alone can save her"? If he thought so, he was not very far wrong.

Whatever may have been the motives which led him to accept the post, he was unanimously elected by

the Court of the Company, on the 24th of November 1697, Governor of Fort St George, to succeed Mr Nathaniel Higginson, who in accordance with his own request was permitted to retire from the Governorship, and to take the second place on the Council of the Fort. The fact that the Court were unanimous on this occasion is significant, the more so as Sir Josiah Child, the late Governor of the Company, who had dominated his colleagues for so many years, and had but lately retired in favour of his kinsman, Sir Thomas Cook, must have been known by the latter to be strongly opposed to Pitt's election. Child has left on record his disapproval of the Court's action on this occasion in a very characteristic letter addressed to a friend from his stately mansion at Wanstead, in which whilst proclaiming his belief in the blamelessness during his long rule of every member of the Company, whose corrupt practices had been so recently exposed in Parliament, he expresses his pious horror that since he had left them, they should have fallen so far from their original righteousness as to take into their service so rude and immoral a man as Pitt. "I cannot say[1]," he writes, "no member of the Company ever committed any fault, but I protest and must do to my death, that I do not yet know any one fault or mistake in their conduct that the Company ever committed during the late reigns. The worst I ever knew them to do was lately in the sending of that roughling immoral man Mr ——— to India last year, which everybody knows I was always against, and the adventurers resented it to such a degree as to turn out eighteen of that Committee whereas I never knew before more than eight removed." It would be difficult to find two men likely to be more repugnant to one another

[1] Hedges I. 35.

than Child and Pitt. The former, a subtle, smug, self-seeking and self-righteous London speculator, versed in every trick of the stock jobbing trade, pitiless of the many victims whose ruin had made him the richest man of his day, professing in all his actions to be animated by the highest possible motives, with an undisguised hatred and contempt, not only of Parliament and the law of the land, but of any constituted authority that stood in the way of his money-getting schemes. He had peremptorily ordered one of the Company's officials in India to obey his mandates whether or not in so doing he was breaking the laws of England, which he said "were a heap of nonsense, compiled by a few ignorant country gentlemen, who knew nothing of commerce and companies." To this despised body of men Pitt belonged, being not only a country gentleman, but also a late member of Parliament. But what must have been far worse in Child's eyes, he was also a rough-tongued old sea captain, who had triumphed over Child's futile efforts to defeat his interloping expeditions, and was only too well acquainted with Child's antecedents and the recent disasters and discredit which he had brought on the Company and the English trade in India. Nor is it likely that he had refrained from expressing his views with respect to them in language which must have seemed to Child little short of blasphemy. It is not therefore surprising that he should have been denounced by Child as a "roughling immoral man," or that Child should have been displeased with those members of the Court who had dared to appoint such a man to the most important of their posts in India. That Pitt was rough in his manners and methods is indisputable. But that in point of morality he compared unfavourably with Child may well be doubted. The sanctimonious are

only too prone to impute immorality to their opponents. It is perhaps to be regretted that Pitt has not left on record in his own simple and forcible words his opinion of Child's morality. We shall probably not be wrong in disregarding Child's opinion of his, except so far as it can be supported by some less questionable testimony.

Pitt's commission was dated the 5th of January 1698[1]. It appointed him President for the Company's affairs on the Coast of Coromandel and Orissa, and of the Gingee and Mahratta countries and Governor of Fort St George and Fort St David, a subordinate settlement lately founded by the Company on the Coast of Coromandel in the vicinity of Pondicherry, some hundred miles south of Fort St George. It had already been fortified, and was destined in another half century to play a prominent part in the struggle for supremacy in India between England and France. His salary and allowance were the same as those of his predecessors, £200 and £100 a year. The only further sum allowed him seems to have been £100 for fresh provisions on his voyage. The instructions accompanying his commission gave him special powers to suspend any of his Council at the Fort *ab officio et beneficio*, if he should find just cause for doing so, provided that he did not reduce the numbers of the Council below five, excluding himself. This power did not extend to the Bengal Council. The latter were however enjoined in a letter from the Court of the 26th of January 1698, to correspond with the Fort on all occasions, "and especially on what may relate to the defeating of Interlopers, wherein," the Court say, "we think our President's advice may be helpful to you, he having engaged to Us to signalise himself therein." Eyre, who was still Chief of the Bengal Council

[1] Hedges 3. 34, 35.

must have opened his eyes when he got this letter at Chuttannuttee, informing him that his old antagonist, whom he had done his best to get hung by Ibrahim Khan as a pirate, was now his official superior, and likely to be helpful in the suppression of the interloping trade.

An important concession allowed to the Governor by the Company permitted his son Robert to go out with him and to reside at Fort St George as a free merchant. The list of personal effects which he was himself permitted to ship on board the vessel that took him and his son out was as follows: "52 chests of wine, 4 chests of Nottingham ale, 21 Hampers, 5 cases of pickles, one little box and six pictures." The one little box bears, it will be observed, much the same proportion to the wine, ale and pickles that the halfpenny worth of bread in Falstaff's tavern bill did to the sack and anchovies. Pitt seems throughout his life to have been fond of good living, a weakness which it is to be feared was shared by the great majority of his contemporaries, and probably shortened many of their lives and tempers. Twenty years before this in one of his earliest letters to Edwards from Kasimbazar, he had written, "Here is a general complaint that we drink a damnable deale of wine this yeare." He has left on record that during his residence in London he kept a good table, "as good wine as the world afforded and plenty." The Court were apparently aware of his tastes in this direction, for on hearing from him that on his arrival at Fort St George he had paid the customs duties on his goods, they wrote to him on the 21st of November, 1699, expressing their approval of his setting so excellent an example to those under him, and added[1], "for making so good

[1] Hedges 3. 37.

a Precedent we have ordered a Tun of the best Sherry to be laden for your accompt on board the King William, now proceeding to Cadiz to take in her bullion." In the following year he writes to his friend Sir Henry Johnson thanking him for another "noble present of a Butt of Sherry[1]." His correspondence teems with references to his strong drinks. In the postscript to another letter of thanks to Sir Henry Johnson he says: "The old proverb is that one should not look a gift horse in the mouth; butt being told that Major Noble putt up the chest of wine you sent me, which came out noe more than 2 doz. 5 bottles, and that too had lost its colour and tast, notwithstanding which I am never the lesse oblidged to you, and heartily thank you for it." Similar mishaps seem to have occurred more than once, when his son Robert in accordance with his directions sent him out wine and ale. For example, his father writes to him on one occasion: "Send me out two chests of Canary, the very best, as many of Nottingham ale drawn off very fine, and ten chests of the best French wine[2]." On receipt of what was sent him out in response to this, he says[3]: "The Florence wine very good, but not above 4 or 5 dozen in each" (chest). "Mr. Shepherd's servants being such villains that it partly run out for want of good corks. The Canary is excellent good, well corked and packd, and that which you call French wine most of it is port, and for the ale and beer all spoilt, not one dropp fit for any use. This is the effect of your great care for my necessarys. I here write you a little, but think the more." The quantity of liquor sent out for his use appears to have been so considerable that at last the Company took to charging him for its

[1] Hedges 3. 64, 65.
[2] Dropmore 1. 32.
[3] Hedges 3. 115.

freight, a grievance which he seems to have felt keenly, if we may judge from one letter to a friend, in which he couples it with their putting spies into his Council[1] "and other little sneaking tricks," which he says will confirm him in his resolution of coming home at once. Writing to his son, some time after this he says: "Send no more wine than what the Company will permit to come out freight free; and none of your mixed stuff but all that is red, let it be true Claret or Florence; for I would not be destitute of a little liquor, if detained here." That he was grateful for choice liquors when he could get them is evidenced by his sending a diamond ring towards the end of his Governorship to Lord Scarborough, who, he says[2], "has been very generous in sending me the best liquors I have had from England." After his return home, he took care when travelling to take his own wine with him. To the end he seems to have lived freely. Some six weeks before his death in 1726, Sir Thomas Hardy writing from Pall Mall says of him[3], "I went to dine with him. The old gentleman breaks fast; and complains much of want of stomach, but eats more than I can do."

He seems, as he usually had done on previous occasions to have made a good voyage out; for he reached Fort St George with his son Robert on the 7th of July 1698, bringing with him the first news of the signing of the Peace of Ryswick, which had been concluded in the previous September. On the 11th of July, the following entry occurs in the Consultation Book of his Council[4]: "Resolved that tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock the Proclamation of the Peace between England and France be read with the usual Solemnity at the inner Fort

[1] Hedges 3. 97.
[2] Dropmore 1. 34.
[3] Dropmore 1. 76.
[4] Wheeler 1. 338.

Gates, and afterwards at all the Gates of the City. And that the Honble Company's Commission appointing the Honble Thomas Pitt Esquire President be read at the New Garden after dinner, all the Right Honble Company's servants and freemen being invited to a treat there by the Governor."

Amongst the earliest matters into which he had as Governor to inquire were certain differences which had arisen between his predecessor, Mr Higginson, and Mr William Fraser and Mr Roger Braddyl, both of whom had been members of the Council of the Fort, but were under suspension on Pitt's arrival[1]. Higginson was in the opinion of Mr Talboys Wheeler, the author of *Madras in the Olden Time*, the first Governor of the Fort who seems to have retired from the Presidency without a stain upon his name[2]. Pitt had now to decide whether he would confirm Higginson's suspensions of Fraser and Braddyl or give the two men another chance. He ultimately reinstated them both. An unsigned paper, without date or signature, but partly in his handwriting is extant, which seems to be the draft of a report on the result of his investigation of the matters in dispute between Fraser and Higginson[3]. So far as can be gathered from this document, he seems to have come to the conclusion that Fraser had been censured unnecessarily on one or two occasions, and that the questions in dispute "had much better be buried in oblivion than raked into"; and he expresses the hope that "what has been done by our predecessors will be amended by ourselves, and that what time has been spent in quarrelling and ruining one another will be spent in improving the Company's revenues, lessening their charges and sending home full ships

[1] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, I. 554, and II. 66.
[2] Wheeler I. 335.
[3] Dropmore I. 1, 2.

in season." His decision was an unfortunate one. Higginson, who had intended to stay on at Fort St George, as second in command, refused to sit on the same Council with Fraser; and returned to England with his family in the following February. If Pitt had been better acquainted with the characters of Fraser and Braddyl, or foreseen the trouble they were both destined to give him, he would certainly have thought twice before reinstating them. For he very soon found himself compelled to send Braddyl home to England for insubordination, and Fraser was an impossible colleague to get on with. He had been a thorn in the side not only of Higginson, but of his predecessor Elihu Yale; and it was his machinations which brought about the unfortunate incidents seized upon by the Court as a ground for Pitt's recall some eleven years afterwards.

# CHAPTER VIII

## FORT ST GEORGE

To help us to understand the life and surroundings of Governor Pitt during the next eleven years, the most important of his career, some account is necessary of the place in which he was practically confined for the whole of that time.

Fort St George is thus graphically described by Hamilton in his *New Account of the East Indies*. "It is situated in one of the most inconvenient places I ever saw. It faces the sea, which continually rolls upon its shore, more here than in any other place on the Coast of Chormandel" (Coromandel). "The foundation is in sand, with a river on its back side, which obstructs all springs of fresh water coming near the town, so that they have no drinkable water within a mile of them, the sea often threatening destruction on one side, and the river in the rainy season on the other; the sun from April to September scorchingly hot; and if the sea breezes did not moisten and cool the air, when they blow, the place could not possibly be inhabited. The soil near the city is so dry and sandy, that it bears no corn, and what fruits, roots and herbage they have are brought to maturity with great pains and trouble."

This melancholy description seems to have been only too true. The place had no harbour, or shelter of any kind for ships[1]. To quote the words of a later

[1] Malleson 140—142.

writer, "Situated on a bluff of the coast where the current was always rapid, and exposed to all the violence of the monsoon and the inconvenience of the surf, which made navigation for English boats impossible, it would have been difficult to find a position less adapted for commercial purposes. The roadstead was dangerous during some months of the year, especially from October to January so that on the appearance of anything approaching a gale during those months, vessels were forced to slip their anchors and run out to sea." It appears from an entry in the Consultation Book of the Fort dated the 9th of October 1687, that seamen had been taught by bitter experience the necessity of doing this. The entry in question is as follows[1], "The monsoon breaking up sooner this year than is expected or usual, there happened great damage to the ships and vessels in these roads. It began on Tuesday the 4th instant, when there ran a great sea and surf all day, and in the afternoon a flurry of wind and rain. On Wednesday, the same great sea and surf continued, and a flurry of wind and rain in the afternoon. On Thursday the wind blew, ships were drawn from their anchors, and some were forced on shore. On Friday a very great storm of wind and rain all day. Saturday the wind blowing very hard all night forced the 'Loyal Adventure' and the 'Borneo Merchant' from their anchors, the former being found this morning broke to pieces at St Thomas' Point, the latter a little to the Southward." Nearly half a century later, in the autumn of 1746, the French fleet under la Bourdonnais, after capturing the Fort had a still more disastrous experience[2]. The 13th of October was a lovely day, one of the finest of the season, but during the night a hurricane arose; and on the 17th, of the eight French men of war that were

[1] Wheeler I. 179. [2] Malleson 175.

anchored in the roads, four had been lost, two rendered utterly unseaworthy, and the remaining two were so damaged as to require almost superhuman exertion to fit them for sea. The fleet had in fact suddenly ceased to exist: and the loss in life alone had exceeded 1200.

Intolerable as the sea was for shipping when the cool weather began, still more so was the land for Europeans at other seasons. During the first year of his Governorship, Pitt suffered severely. Writing in November 1699, he says[1], "In May last I was Seiz'd with a Violent feaver, and Convulsions from head to foot, which gave me a kind of pallsey in my limbs, that sometimes I was not able to write or hold a glass of wine. I made a shift to put the best Side out, when the Men of Warr were here, but lay by it afterwards. But since the Northerly Winds came in, I find it much better, but am still troubled with a Violent heat, which seems to be in the bones. If the hot winds next year be Soe Violent as they were this last, 'twill sweep most of us away. The Bengall or Persia ayire agrees much better with me than this."

In dealing with the unpromising soil of the settlement, Pitt had ample scope for indulging in his hobby for forestry and gardening; and he seems to have been at great pains to grow vegetables and fruit there. Writing to Beard in Bengal in January 1703[2], he says, "I should be extremely obliged to you if you wd. send me by all conveyances good store of garden seeds, such as pease, beans, turnips, cabages, water melons, &c.; and they must be new and the best way of putting them up is in bottles. The Armenian on the 'Johanna' sent me a few, which I believe he had in Patna, which proved very good." About the same time he writes to Samuel Ongley,

[1] Hedges 3. 49. [2] Wilson 1. 372.

an old friend of his on the Court of the Company in London, "My liesure time I generally spend in gardening and planting and making such improvements as I hope will tend to the Compa.'s advantage and the good of the whole place, for that in a little time I hope the place will be able to subsist without much dependance from the country, for that in the long siege wee were not a little pinched for provisions."

Hamilton in his account of the earlier history of the settlement is not so accurate as in his description of the place itself, with which he must have been well acquainted, having at one time been a householder there[1]. As is his wont when in lack of actual knowledge, he enlivens his history with a scandalous story. "The reason why a fort," he says, "was built in that place is not easy to account for; but the tradition is that the gentleman, who received his orders to build it, chose that place to ruin the Portuguese trade at St Thomas. Others again allege with more probability that the gentleman aforesaid, whom I take to be Sir William Langhorn, had a mistress at St Thomas he was enamoured of, that made him build there that their interviews might be more frequent and uninterrupted."

As a matter of fact, the fort was built in 1639 by a Mr Day, some 30 years before Sir William Langhorne became Governor. Mr Day was a member of the Council at Masulipatam, from which place it was found necessary to move the headquarters of the Company on the Coast of Coromandel, in consequence of the exactions of a local rajah. The site was selected for want of a better one, owing to its proximity to the Portuguese settlement at St Thomas, better known as St Thomé after its capture by the French. Day's object was not to ruin the trade of

[1] Mrs Frank Penny's *History of Fort St George*, p. 88.

the Portuguese, but to obtain their assistance in making head against their common enemy, the Dutch, who had recently ousted the English and other Europeans from the Spice Islands and were suspected not without reason of entertaining similar designs against the English and Portuguese settlers on the eastern coast of India. Mr Day succeeded in obtaining from a native chief in the neighbourhood the grant of a tract of land, stretching some five or six miles along the shore and one mile inland, with its front to the sea and a river to its rear, as described by Hamilton. On the southern end of this narrow strip of territory he enclosed a plot of land about 400 yards long and 100 yards wide with an embrasured wall, inside which he built the original fort and a factory. So far from having been ordered by the Company to build the fort, he was sharply taken to task by them for doing so; for the Court regarded it as a very hazardous experiment. In 1648 they summoned one of Day's subordinates, who was then in England, before them "to answer the charge of building Fort St George"; and after hearing him, determined that if it should not prove advantageous, Mr Day should be charged with the cost of the fortifications which had amounted to £2294. It proved, however, a greater success than had been anticipated, owing to its favourable position for obtaining coast goods, and to the great encouragement which the settlement had received from the natives and the Portuguese at St Thomas. In 1653 it attained the rank of a Presidency; and from that time forward became the chief establishment of the Company on the Coast of Coromandel. The walled enclosure within which the factory had been built was laid out in streets and alleys; and as Europeans only were allowed to live in it, became known for many generations as White Town. To the north

of it a larger quarter sprang up, occupied at first by a rapidly increasing number of natives and called by way of distinction Black Town, into which the European population overflowed when it became too large for accommodation in White Town. To the south rose a smaller village, chiefly inhabited by weavers and other natives in the employment of the factory. Inland in proximity to the Fort were four smaller villages, Triplicane, Nunquinbancum, Egmore and Persewankum. Almost adjoining the extremity of the Company's territory on the south, and about four miles from the Fort, was the Portuguese settlement of St Thomé.

From the first the tenure of Fort St George by the Company had been precarious; and the settlement could not have been retained for them but for its fortifications—such as they were—to the building of which the Court had taken such strong objection. These were repaired and strengthened from time to time by successive Governors, who not unnaturally were more keenly alive to the necessity of protecting the goods and lives of the Europeans committed to their charge than their masters at home were. Sir William Langhorne, who was Governor from 1670 to 1679, and whose morality is so undeservedly called in question by Hamilton, was twice placed in a very awkward position, first when the French, who were then allies of the English, occupied St Thomé, the settlers of which had been of such service to the English in the earlier days of the Presidency, and secondly when at a time when the English were at war with the Dutch, a Mussulman force acting in concert with the Dutch, invested and took St Thomé. The Dutch ceded St Thomé, when captured, to the local Nawab, and would no doubt have proceeded to make short work of Fort St George, had not news very opportunely arrived of

the conclusion of peace between England and Holland. Sir Streynsham Master, Governor of the Fort from 1679 to 1681, a capable, honest and resolute man, who prior to his appointment had greatly distinguished himself by his gallant defence of the Company's factory at Surat against Sivaji, prudently improved the defences of the settlement, and successfully repulsed the attacks of a large body of Mahrattas who had blockaded it and had reduced the garrison to the verge of starvation. With great difficulty he saved the situation by a series of bold and skilfully devised sorties, by means of which he managed to bring in goods and provisions by force from the besiegers. He obtained no credit from the Company for these exploits. On the contrary he was severely reprimanded, and admonished that the safety of the factory depended not on the strength of its fortifications, but on the firmans which it was his duty to obtain from the native rulers; a favourite theory at that time of Sir Josiah Child, the absurdity of which was shortly afterwards demonstrated, when he persuaded the Company with ludicrously inadequate forces and a hopelessly incompetent commander to enter on their disastrous war against the Mogul. On venturing to remonstrate and to press for certain reforms, some of which were afterwards adopted by Child, Master, whose main offence seems to have been that he was a gentleman, which Child was not, was not only superseded but ordered to come home at once by the first ship that left the coast that season, without being allowed the customary interval allowed to superseded Governors to get in the moneys owing to them from the native merchants. He returned to England in disgrace, an object lesson to his successors of the consequences of subordinating his own interests to those of his employers. During Pitt's Presidency he was still

fruitlessly trying to get back from India some of the debts owing to him. The rancour and self-complacency of Child, when dealing with those who presumed to differ from him, are well exemplified in the letter which he addressed to the Council of the Fort on this occasion. "By the Sampson," he writes[1], "we received our late Agent Master and Councell's letters of the 13th of September and 20th December, in which he followeth his old straine of errours, pride and offence, which we shall not further endeavour to confute or convince him of, but leave him now at his greater leasure, freed from the Temptation and encumbrance of that greatness and immensitie of gaine, which our Bounty had confer'd upon him, to recollect himselt and consider whether he did well or wisely for himself or honestly by us."

Five years later the Company had begun their war with the Mogul, and within a few months every one of their factories in Bengal had been seized or abandoned, while such of their servants as had not perished or fallen into the enemy's hands were brought with Charnock for refuge to Fort St George, the only place where they could hope for safety, until the conclusion of an ignominious peace. Elihu Yale, the benefactor of Yale University, was then Governor of the Fort. It might have been thought that now at any rate, whilst the war was still waging, and the enemy almost at his gates, the Governor would have been justified in the eyes of the Company in strengthening the defences of their principal settlement, which he did by surrounding Black Town with a ditch and an entrenchment[2]. But he got into great difficulty afterwards for so doing, and was called upon to pay the whole of the cost himself. Mr William Fraser, whose official rôle seems always to have been to thwart and irritate the Governor

[1] Hedges 2. 247. [2] Wheeler 1. 219.

for the time being, had, it appears, only consented to the work being carried out on the condition that "the Honrable Company be not at any sixpence charge thereon," and the consent of another member of the Council had also been conditional on the promise of the Governor to reimburse the Company if they disapproved of the work. Sir John Goldsborough, who had come out from England as Commissary General mainly for the purpose of settling certain differences that had arisen between Yale and his Council, gave his decision against the Governor on this point[1]. "The Commissary General," to quote from the Consultation Book, "finding the mud Points and Walls about the Black Town cost several thousand Pagodas, and that Governor Yale had made them at the Right Honble Company's charge against their positive order and most of the Council's express exceptions, did desire Judge Dolben to make demand of President Yale for three thousand five hundred and eighty-three Pagodas with interest, being the cost of them and a Physic Garden." Fortunately for himself, Yale was a very rich man, and cannot have been personally much inconvenienced by this iniquitous decision, which Dolben declined to endorse on the ground that the Company's claims were barred by the Statute of Limitations. But Yale's treatment on this occasion is an example of the risks any Governor ran, who during Child's régime dared to do his duty as President in an emergency, without waiting for the Company's sanction, which in those days it must have taken considerably more than a twelvemonth to obtain.

Some years before Pitt became Governor, the native population of the Presidency was estimated to have risen to 300,000. During Yale's Presidency the Armenians had been encouraged to settle there

[1] Wheeler I. 267.

under an agreement with the Company in 1688, which gave them equal privileges with English merchants. We have no record of their numbers; but their advent must have materially increased the trade of the town. The English population was comparatively very small. Exclusive of the garrison, it was considerably under 200 at the end of 1699[1]. The males were of three classes, 30 servants of the Company, 35 free merchants, and 38 seafaring men not constant inhabitants of the town. With the two latter classes, Pitt was probably in closer touch than any previous Governor had been, having himself risen from their ranks. Of the English ladies in the settlement 14 were widows, 10 single young women and 22 wives of Englishmen. The death rate of the men was so high that the ranks of the widows were constantly being recruited. The wealthier ones seem to have been much in request; but the poorer, even when good looking, must often have had a bad time, if we may judge from a letter to Pitt from one of his staff who, disappointed in his suit for a rich widow, writes to the Governor thus[2]: "To misse a rich widdow, tolarablie handsome and not verry old is in my opinion a much greater misfortune than to lose halfe a dozen other mistresses, though in their prime of youth and beauty, if without money, which some whether wise or otherwise run mad for the loss of. I find there is no coming in for a rich widdow in Maddaras without securing the reversion some years before their husbands' death, therefore thinke had better bespeake the present widdow against her becoming soe a second time, thereby to anticipate other pretenders." He adds with reference to a suggestion which seems to have emanated from Governor Pitt, who appears to have been rather fond of matchmaking, "You

[1] Wheeler I. 356. [2] Dropmore I. 4.

are pleased to commend one Mrs Middleton for a pritty woman and who you believe will make an excellent wife. I cannot doubt but your experienced judgment therein must be sound as on other more weightie affaires." But he respectfully declines to accept the proposition, unless his position can be improved. "Should think myselfe extreamely happy in such a wife," he writes, "but cannot in conscience endeavour to compasse it by making the lady miserable. Were I thought worthy to have the title Deputy Governor conferred on me by your Honour should readily become a suitor to the good lady to compleat my happiness in this worlde."

In another letter a young lady stationed at Fort St David thanks Pitt for his efforts on her behalf. "The gentlemen[1]," she tells him, "are pretty civil to me now, but I can attribute that to nothing but your Honour's goodness in making them soe. I now make bold to acquaint your Honour that I have some thoughts of marreing Captain Greenhaugh, if your Honour shall approve, but not else. Indeed the only reason that endusees me to it is I formerly made him a kind of promise, though after which with my own free consent, it was quite as I thought broke off by my brother: but he has now again so importunately renued his courtship that I know not how to be rid of him. Another reason is that I may be freed from the courtship of some others in this place, which I think wod be but as indifferent matches as the other. Could I have got home to England, I wod not have staid here for the best husband in India." It is to be feared that this last sentiment was shared by many an exiled lady in those days.

The garrison of the Fort had been reduced at the conclusion of the war with the Mogul. The

[1] Dropmore I. 10.

following extract from a letter of the Court, dated the 22nd of January 1692, will give some idea of its composition[1]. "We being now in full peace would have but two full Companies of soldiers maintained here, besides what inferior force you may think fit to raise of Cofferies[2]; and in those two Companies we would be at no further charge of Officers, but only of Lieutenants and Ensigns, Sarjants and Corporals, Captains being needless in times of peace. But you may entertain an aid Major, who is to have no Company, but to superintend over all our officers and soldiers under the Command of our Commissary General when he is present, and under our President when our Commissary General is absent. This is the Dutch method in all their garrisons in India, and it is the best that can be invented in peaceable times. Our aid Major, Captain Hilton at Bombay, hath four shillings a day, besides twenty shillings a month as aid Major; and that we resolve shall be his standing pay, and the standing pay of all aid Majors in India in every garrison, where there is need of such officers.

"But we would have you by all means to keep on foot your Troop of Volunteer horse, and to increase the number of them under the immediate command of our President; and our Artillery Company of all the Company's English servants under the command of Captain Thomas Gray. And sometimes for recreation we would have you to exercise both horse and foot in the field, that the men may be perfect in the use of their arms, and the horses be used to abide the sound of Drums,

[1] Wheeler I. 250.

[2] *I.e.* Kaffirs. Natives. Black native slaves imported from Madagascar, who are stated in a letter from the Court to Fort St David to be "the truest People and the stoutest Blacks you could trust to, having no affinity or Relation to the black people in those countreys nor speaking any of their Languages." Hedges 2. 356.

Trumpets and report of Guns, without starting. Being always in a posture of defence is a sure way to preserve your peace and draw esteem and report, honour and obedience from the natives with little or no charge to the Company."

In times of need this slender force could be supplemented, as will be seen, by a Marine Company of seamen landed from any ships from England that might be in the roads; by trainbands from Black Town commanded by European officers; and by a Company formed out of the Portuguese inhabitants of the settlement. But it compared in numbers very unfavourably with the Dutch garrison at Batavia which consisted of 3000 European soldiers[1].

Every servant of the Company had a right to free quarters in the Fort, with lights, attendants and various subsistence allowances. None of them might live outside the Fort without special leave. Their lives within it were regulated on much the same lines as those of students in colleges in England. From the highest to the lowest they were required to attend daily the hearing of morning and evening prayers and to listen every Sunday to two sermons at the Church of St Mary's, which had been completed in 1680 during the Presidency of Streynsham Master, and which still remains an interesting example of seventeenth century architecture. It is thus described by Lockyer, who visited the Fort during Pitt's Presidency[2]. "The Church is a large pile of arched building with curious carved work, a stately altar, organ, a white copper candlestick, very large windows which render it inferior to the Churches in London in nothing but bells, there being one only, to mind sinners of devotion, though I have heard a contribution for a set was formerly remitted the Company." It still contains a massive silver

[1] Dropmore I. 3. [2] Lockyer p. 18.

alms-dish given by Governor Yale, and a silver font basin and flagon presented in memory of Lady Goldsborough in 1689 besides many other interesting mementoes of early Anglo-Indian celebrities. Here the servants of the Company sat in the pews assigned to them in order of their rank. The Governor's was in the gallery, the access to which, still in existence, was outside the Church. His entrance was a solemn function, passing as he did through two lines of soldiers drawn up from the inner fort to the Church door in his honour[1]. On his approach the organ struck up and continued to play until he was seated[2]. A special sitting had been constructed, shortly before Pitt came out, for the Mayor under the Clerk's desk, where his two silver gilt maces could be conveniently displayed on either side of him. Behind were the Aldermen in their scarlet serge robes and the burgesses in white china silk gowns.

Thomas Pitt throughout his stay at Fort St George seems to have kept up a considerable amount of state. Lockyer says of him[3] "He seldom goes abroad with less than three or four score Peons arm'd, besides his English guards to protect him. He has two Union flags carry'd before him and Country Musick enough to frighten a stranger into a Belief the men were mad. Two Dabashes attend to cool him with Fans and drive away the Flies that would otherwise molest him. He is a Man of great Parts, respected as a Prince by the Rajas of the Country, and is in every respect as great: save those are for themselves, this has Masters." "During the hot Winds, he retires to the Companys new Garden for Refreshment which he has made a very delightful place of a barren one: Its costly Gates,

[1] Lockyer p. 19.
[2] Wheeler I. 266.
[3] Lockyer p. 24.

lovely Bowling Green, spacious Walks, Teal-pond, and Curiosities preserv'd in several Divisions are worthy to be admired[1]." "The Governour's Lodging takes up about a third part of the inner Fort, is three stories high, and has many commodious apartments in it: Two or three of the Council have their Rooms there, as well as several inferiour Servants: The 'Countant's and Secretary's Offices are kept one Story up: but the Consultation-Room is higher, curiously adorn'd with Fire-arms, in several Figures, imitating those in the Armory of the Tower of London." Here the Company's servants took their dinner at noon and their supper at the close of the day seated strictly in order of precedence. The Company's plate, which made its appearance on these occasions, was very old and battered when Pitt came to the Fort[2]. In 1703 it was melted down and valued at something less than £100. But Pitt had brought out with him a set of plate of his own, which after being used for some years at the general table, was taken over for the Company at a valuation when the older plate had been melted down. It weighed 2240 ounces. The metal was valued at £700, and the fashioning of it at £65. It included 66 silver plates, 12 dishes, and 7 covers, 4 large candlesticks, 1 Menteith, 2 large and 2 small salvers, 1 large salt, 6 small salts, 3 porringers, 1 teapot, 1 large ladle, 16 spoons and 6 forks. On grand occasions the more important pieces must have made quite a grand display. The meals were plentiful and prepared by Indian, Portuguese and English cooks. The junior members of the fraternity seem to have usually drunk Shiraz wine from Persia, and what is called in the records "bowl punch," which is stated by a contemporary writer[3] to have been

[1] Lockyer p. 22.
[2] Wheeler 2. 16.
[3] Bernier, see Wilson 1. 66.

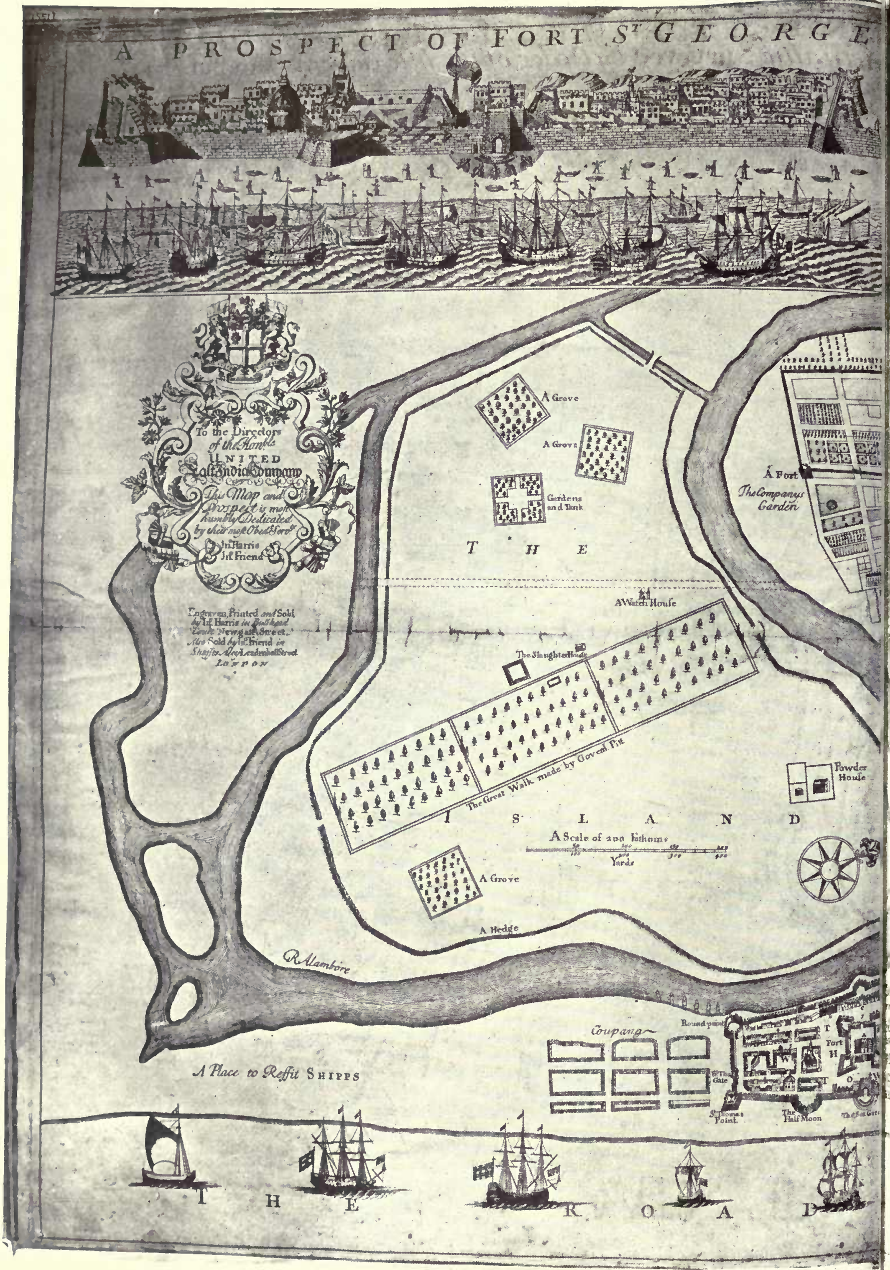
made of "arrack, black sugar, the juice of lemon, water, and a little muscardine squeezed upon it." "It is pleasant enough to the taste," this gentleman adds, whose experience of it seems to have been much the same as that of Jos. Sedley at Vauxhall, "but the plague of body and health." Its consumption was no doubt a contributory cause of the unseemly behaviour at the General table, the punishments for which are recorded from time to time in the Consultation Books. At the high table, the members of the Council and the higher officials indulged in European wines and beer, which were regarded as exceptional luxuries.

The members of the Council met every Monday and Thursday morning in the Consultation Room and the result of their deliberations, together with any notable local occurrences, was entered by the Secretary in the Consultation Books provided for the purpose. Copies of all entries in these books, which are still extant, were sent home regularly to the Company. They usually bear unmistakeable marks of the literary style of the Governor for the time being. On this account and because of the importance of some of the occurrences recorded in them, some of the entries in these books during the next few years are of exceptional interest.

Taken as a whole the daily routine work of the servants of the Company at the Fort must have been terribly monotonous. After morning prayers till the dinner at noon, they were supposed to be engaged in their commercial avocations, the sale, purchase, sorting and examination of the Company's goods, the packing and unpacking and exposure of them for sale, the payment and receipt of moneys and the keeping of accounts. On ordinary occasions very little work seems to have been done after 12 o'clock, except by such younger members of the

staff as chose to learn the languages of the country, for proficiency in which they were rewarded by gratuities varying from £20 to £10. The rest of the day was left for such recreation as was obtainable. But the facilities for recreation must have been very limited. The gardens of the Company, their servants and the richer merchants of the place, shown in the survey of Fort St George made during the Governorship of Pitt, of which a copy has been reproduced for the purpose of the present work, were the main available recreation grounds. The most important of these, the Company's garden, which Pitt so greatly improved, contained a building called the Garden House, in which entertainments were sometimes held. Billiard tables had by this time found their way to India, and may possibly have been in the houses of some of the members of the Council[1]. Some of the Company's servants had horses to ride. But there were no pleasure-trips on the water such as seem to have been common in Bengal: nor could there have been many opportunities for sport. For it was not permissible to go far inland in pursuit of game. Except at times when the ships came in, or were being got ready for their return to Europe, or the Company's staff and the garrison were engaged in drill or military manœuvres, time must have hung very heavily on their hands. Poor Clive, when he came out to the Fort years afterwards as a young writer, found his life there so intolerable, that he was led to attempt to put an end to it by suicide. The literature which the Company sent out for the library seems to have consisted mainly of books of Divinity, the value of which was estimated by Lockyer[2] to be £438. 6*s.* 0*d.* In the circumstances it is not surprising that the officers of the garrison

[1] Wilson 1. 141; Hedges 2. 92 and 3. 80.
[2] Lockyer p. 20.




Prospect of Fort St George and Plan of the City of Madras A

*From the engravin*

ually Surveyed by Order of the Late Governor Tho. Pitt, Esq.

*n the Bodleian*

were often quarrelling with one another, and that some of the civilians followed their example. The latter however were as a general rule kept on their good behaviour by the hope of some day making their fortunes. The officers had no such hopes as yet, nor indeed until some half-century later when Clive had shown them how easy a business it was to enrich themselves with the hoarded treasures of vanquished native rulers. Their poor prospects at this time must have largely conduced to the drunkenness and insubordination which are from time to time recorded against them in the Consultation Books. The most incorrigible of the officers in Pitt's day was Lieutenant Seaton, who was repeatedly dismissed the service for quarrelling in his cups, and subsequently reinstated, because there was no one who could be trusted to take his place. For a similar reason, the surgeon, Dr Brown, who had been convicted for an assault on a native collector of customs[1] "having broken his face with a pistol," pulled his beard and otherwise maltreated him, after "being committed to the custody of the Marshall that others might be deterr'd from the like, and that the inhabitants might understand that such practices were not allowed," was within the week "discharged from his confinement, in consideration of his patients suffering for want of his assistance." Unruly clerks and writers could be more easily spared and were sometimes promptly sent home by the next ship. One such case is thus recorded in the Consultation Book[2]. "Mr. Richard Pearson, writer, who came out on the Phœnix and immediately sent to Masulipatam, where he behaved himself very insolently to his superiors, for which they sent him hither in January last, where soon after he behaved himself very impudently to the

[1] Wheeler 1. 301. [2] Wheeler 2. 15.

Governor, who confined and punished him for it, and afterwards upon his submission and acknowledging his fault with promises of amendment, he was set at liberty, when a few days after he quarrelled at the Company's General Table, where he gave opprobrious language to several and blows to boot, so finding him an incorrigible and debauched fellow, and keeping him here may tend to the ruin of several of the young men in the Company's service, it is agreed that he be confined to the inward Fort, and sent for England by the first opportunity; and that he be permitted to come no more to the Company's table, but that the Steward send him such provisions as the Governor directs." Writing home of this young man to the Governor of the Company, Pitt says[1]: "You are pleas'd to give your reasons in your last letter for the reducing of your Trade, and yet at the same time you very much increase your charge, by sending out soe great a number of ffactors and writers, having here at this time three times as many as you have occasion for, besides some of 'em so refractory that I should as willingly see 'em return to their ffriends as I believe their ffriends were glad to get rid of 'em, more particularly one Person, who has lately been guilty of such a piece of insolence as is not to be parrellel'd, whom I have at this time under confinement and will severely punish him, tho' here it is an Imbib'd Notion in Some who ought to know better, that noe Servant of yours ought to have corporall punishment, which has been the ruine of many a Youth in this place. Some others I could name who I hope are reclaim'd, and will make you good servants."

The principal members of the Council, who assisted the Governor in the discharge of his onerous

[1] Hedges 3. 81.

and multifarious duties at Fort St George, taking them in order of their precedence, were[1] the Accountant or Bookkeeper, whose Department was responsible for the establishment and general commercial accounts of the settlement; the Keeper of the Warehouses and Stores; the Customer, who was the chief buyer of native merchandise; the Collector of the rents and customs of the town and also a Justice of the Peace; and lastly the Secretary, who attended all the meetings of the Council, kept the Consultation Books and was responsible for the official correspondence. Each of these had under him his staff of writers and apprentices. The Chaplain of the Fort ranked after the Accountant and the Surgeon after the Customer. The Chaplain's duties included the teaching of the children of the soldiers, and a schoolroom for the purpose was provided in White Town. Most of the mothers of the children taught in it were Portuguese women and Roman Catholics, whom at one time the soldiers were prohibited from marrying, a restriction which had very properly been removed by Streynsham Master during his Presidency[2]. His defence to the Court for this reversal of their policy was "that it is our interest to allow of the marriage of our men with these women, to prevent wickedness, and in regard there is not Englishwomen enough for the men, and the common soldiers cannot maintain English women and children with their pay, as well as they can the women of the country, who are not so expensive, and not less modest than our common or ordinary people are." These reasons, good as they were, might probably not have satisfied the Court, but for a further one, which Master threw in, which was that, "in matter of marriages we have already gained many hopeful children,

[1] Wheeler I. 52. [2] Wheeler I. 109.

brought up in the Protestant religion," and the condition imposed on the approval of the Company to every such marriage, which was "that both the parties to be married shall solemnly promise before one of the Chaplains of the place by themselves, or some for them, before the Banns shall be published, and also in the Chapel or Church by themselves in person, that all the children by them begotten and born shall be brought up in the Protestant religion." The number of the children who attended these schools seems to have been fairly large. They were "taught to read and cipher and imbued with the principles of the Protestant religion." The members of the Court at home seem to have taken considerable interest in their spiritual welfare, and constantly sent out bibles and catechisms for their use. They went indeed so far as to give the Council authority to expend the Company's funds on prizes. "When any," they wrote, "shall be able to repeat the Catechism by heart, you may give to each of them two rupees for their encouragement." We may be sure that with this prospect before them very few of the children failed to learn their catechism. The sight of these little ones going every day to and from the school must have had a beneficial and humanising effect on the other occupants of the factory.

No account of Fort St George, as Governor Pitt knew it, can properly omit some reference to the Mayor and Corporation and the Court of Judicature, each of which institutions owed its origin to Sir Josiah Child. The main object of the creation of the former seems to have been to facilitate the collection of revenue from the native inhabitants of Black Town, and that of the latter to obtain judicial decisions in favour of the Company, in every case in which their interests were seriously

concerned. One of the grounds on which Streynsham Master had been dismissed from his Governorship by Child in 1681 had been that he had levied a house tax on the inhabitants of Black Town. The next year Child had been converted to the view that it was essential to levy some such tax. On the 20th of September 1682 he wrote to the Agency[1] "Our meaning as to the revenue of the town is that one way or another by Dutch, Portugese or Indian methods, it should be brought to defray at least the whole constant charge of the place, which is essential in all governments of the world. People protected ought in all parts of the universe in some way or other to defray the charge of their protection and preservation from wrong and violence." Governor Gifford having felt some difficulty in complying with this instruction, Child became more and more angry at the delay, and more and more bitter and peremptory in his orders. But it was not until January 1686 that Gifford ventured to give directions to Mr John Littleton to collect a tax from the native inhabitants "by all moderate ways and fair means possible, that they may not be discontented or any disturbance arise thereby[2]." "Notwithstanding this," to quote from the entry made in the Consultation Book on that occasion, "and the oft-repeated reasons and arguments with them for the ready and quiet payment thereof, they did this morning in contempt of the Government and our orders, tumultuously and mutinously combine together commanding the several castes to desist from their labour and service to us; also prohibiting and hindering the shops to be opened and grain to be brought into the town: insolently declaring that they would continue in their rebellion till they were freed from the said present and all future taxes."

[1] Wheeler I. 137. [2] Wheeler I. 151.

A very small display of force and resolution however soon brought them to their senses. The soldiers of the garrison were ordered out, and the Choultry drum beaten about the town, and proclamation made that if the heads of the several castes did not come in and submit themselves before sunset to the President and Council, begging pardon for their great crime, their dwelling houses would be pulled down and the ground sold by public auction and they and their families banished for ever from the town: that all persons in the Company's service, if they did not at once come in to their several employments, would be dismissed and never allowed to re-enter the service: and that if the Bazaar people did not at once open their shops and sell their goods as usual, their shops and their goods would be confiscated and each of them fined ten pagodas. The result of these proceedings was that in the evening the heads of the several castes came into the fort praying to be heard the following day. Next morning they brought in a very humble petition begging for forgiveness and pleading for the remission of the tax "for the sake of the Most High God, and in the name of the most serene King of England and of the Honble Company." But on finding that the Council were in earnest, they gave in unconditionally, and there seems to have been little further difficulty in the collection of the tax.

On hearing of what had happened, Child wrote again to the Council[1]. "A revenue we will have *aliquo modo*, for that infinite charge we have been at to raise that Town (which hereafter we shall call a city) from so despicable a condition as it was when we settled there. With your leave we will have a ground or quit rent for every house within

[1] Wheeler I. 157.

your precinct and a small poll money for every head, as the Dutch have in Batavia." And again in the following year "We do hereby order and ordain as a law in our City of Madras (which we require you to publish with the usual solemnity) all persons owners or occupiers of any houses or lands within our precinct, that shall neglect or refuse for three months after publication to bring in the arrears of their respective quit rent imposed upon them, such shall for ever hereafter stand charged and pay to the Company double the quit rent formerly imposed upon them." Three months after despatching this last letter, he decided to set up a Municipal Corporation for the city, the Mayor and three Aldermen to be English servants of the Company, and the remainder Portuguese, Armenians and natives, heads of the several castes, in the belief, as he said, that the natives "would more willingly and liberally disburse five shillings for the public good if taxed by themselves than sixpence imposed on them by despotical power[1]," a belief which seems to have been founded on his knowledge of the English rather than of the native character. A Royal Charter of Incorporation was obtained in due course: robes, chains and maces sent out: and the first meeting of the New Corporation was held in September 1688, when the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses with their Recorder, duly took their oaths, went to dinner and marched in their robes with their maces before them to the Town Hall. No municipal assessment seems however to have been made until some years afterwards, and the first recorded action of the Corporation was a request that some of the Company's dues levied on the town might be handed over to them, on the ingenious plea that "this was usual in all Corporations in

[1] Wheeler I. 198.

England." This request seems to have been granted at the next meeting of the Council.

The Mayor and Aldermen were justices of the peace, and had power to try all petty cases brought before them, with an appeal in civil cases to the President and Council and in criminal cases to the Judge Advocate. This last official had been sent out in 1684 to supersede the former Court of Judicature, which was not considered to have worked satisfactorily[1]. The respect with which the decisions of this important officer were regarded by the Court of the Company in London, may be gauged by their dismissal of Judge Advocate Dolben in 1694, mainly it would appear on the ground that in an action brought by the Company against their late President Yale, he had given a decision, the correctness of which does not seem to have been questioned, that the Company's claim was barred by the Statute of Limitations. His dismissal was accompanied by a direction to the Council that "due respect be given to a person of his quality and abilities, in consideration of which," the Court add "it is a trouble to us to part with him[2]." After his dismissal from the Company's service Dolben engaged successfully in private trade on his own account. In 1699 the Court determined to reinstate him. But he declined the offer, pleading that he was so far engaged on a voyage to China, that he could not without hazard of ruining himself break it off. Every member of the Council then declined the post of Judge Advocate in succession: and it was ultimately accepted by the Registrar. Dolben's treatment by the Company was certainly not calculated to encourage any self-respecting lawyer even in those days to become an applicant for the appointment.

[1] Wheeler I. 288. [2] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, 2. 30.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE NEW EAST INDIA COMPANY

THE six months, which Thomas Pitt had spent in his voyage out to India to take up his Governorship, had been fateful to his employers in England. Now that the war with France had come to an end, the King and his ministers had found long arrears of domestic difficulties awaiting settlement, none of which was more pressing than that of the Eastern trade. The Government were in urgent need of ready money to meet their liabilities, and very desirous of finding some expedient, by which they could raise it without incurring the unpopularity incident to the imposition of additional taxation. They therefore practically put the monopoly of the trade to the East Indies up to auction, with greater regard to their political exigencies than to the development of the commercial resources of the nation. The Old East India Company made them a handsome offer to lend them £700,000 at 4 per cent. as the consideration for the confirmation of their existing Charter and the maintenance of the exclusive rights, which it purported to confer on them, the most important of which the House of Commons had declared to be valueless until confirmed by Act of Parliament. The Dowgate Association met this offer by proposing that a loan of two millions should be raised by public subscription, to carry interest at 8 per cent., and that the subscribers should have the monopoly of the Eastern trade.

So great were the needs of the King's Ministry that they preferred this larger loan, at the higher rate of interest; and the Bill for enabling it to be raised, though bitterly fought in both Houses by the friends of the Old Company, received the Royal Assent on the 5th of July 1698, two days before Pitt landed at Fort St George. The Act thus passed empowered the King to make the subscribers a body corporate under the name of "The General Society trading to the East Indies." Every subscriber to the fund was to be entitled to trade to the East Indies to the amount of his subscription; whilst such of them as were willing or desirous might be formed into a Joint Stock Company. The subscribers were to have the exclusive monopoly of the Eastern trade, subject to the condition that the Old East India Company, to whom three years' notice was due under their Charter, were to be permitted to continue their trade in competition with the New Company until September 1701. In the meanwhile all the estates of the Old Company were to be chargeable with their debts, and if any dividends were paid before these debts were discharged, the shareholders who received them were to be personally responsible, to the extent of the sums received by way of dividends, for any deficiency in the event of the Company's estates proving insufficient for the repayment of the Company's debts. On the face of the Act it seemed to most persons as if the only hope of the continuance of the existence of the Old Company lay in the failure of the public to subscribe the two millions.

This hope was soon gone. The subscription books were opened in the Hall of the Mercers' Company on the 14th of July, and closed on the following day, the whole of the two millions having been subscribed. On the 3rd of September a Charter passed the Great Seal constituting the subscribers

a body corporate, and empowering them to trade on the terms of a regulated Company, each subscriber on his own account. The majority having signified their desire to trade upon a Joint Stock, another Charter dated the 5th of September formed such of them as did not desire to trade on their own account into a Joint Stock Company by the name of "The English Company trading to the East Indies."

There can be little doubt that the proprietors of the New Company thus formed confidently expected to step into the Old Company's shoes in India on comparatively easy terms; and to buy such of their predecessors' possessions there as they might care to have on a forced sale at the end of three years. But the Old Company had taken effective steps to avert any such catastrophe. One of the largest subscribers to the Government loan had been their own Secretary, Mr Dubois, who acting under their directions had put down his name as subscriber for 300,000 guineas; and had been one of those who had elected to avail themselves of the privilege of trading on their own account. The Old Company were therefore in this position. They were allowed by the Act of Parliament to retain their rights and privileges under their Charter unimpaired for the next three years; and by their subscription they had purchased the right to trade on their own account to the East to the extent of £315,000, which right would not lapse at the end of that time. In the meanwhile the whole of the two millions subscribed had passed into the hands of the Government; and the only moneys the New Company had got to trade with were the instalments of interest payable to them by the Government on so much of it as had been subscribed by the persons who had signified their willingness to trade upon

a Joint Stock. These of themselves were obviously insufficient to enable them to compete in trade successfully with the Old Company for the next three years. The New Company had got their monopoly, but as the consideration for granting it the Government had abstracted from them the whole of their trading capital; leaving them to traffic as best they could without it in competition with rivals well established in the trade, who had ample funds at their disposal.

They were therefore forced for the present to carry on their commerce by means of precarious borrowings. In the first year of their existence they succeeded in raising on credit £178,000, with which they equipped and loaded three ships, one of which they sent to the Presidency of Bombay, one to Madras and one to Bengal. During the same year the Old Company sent out 13 ships at a cost of £525,000. Realising the extent to which they were thus handicapped in competing with their rivals in trade, the New Company endeavoured to improve their position by some compensating adventitious assistance from the Government, whom they persuaded at the last moment to confer on the three men whom they were sending out as their Agents the powers and titles of King's Consuls. These consular appointments were an example of the political morality of the age. The most important duties of an English Consul are to protect the interests of such of his countrymen as are resident in the foreign country to which he is accredited. But the great majority of the English residents in India were servants of the Old Company, the very persons whose interests these Consuls were being sent out to injure to the utmost of their power. Nor were the antecedents of the men entrusted with these extraordinary powers such as to inspire the

smallest hope that the English residents in India would obtain fair treatment at their hands. Two of them, Nicholas Waite, who was thus appointed the King's Consul for the Presidency of Bombay, and Edward Littleton, the Consul for Bengal, were quondam servants of the Old Company, who had been dismissed from its service for misconduct. The third, who had been appointed Consul for Madras, was John Pitt, a distant cousin and acquaintance of Governor Pitt. Two or three years before this he had been employed by the Old Company in a subordinate position at Fort St George. His selection as Consul seems to have been due partly to the consideration that he had some slight experience of the Company's trade in that part of the world, and partly to the hope that he might be able to detach some of his old comrades at Fort St George and possibly the Governor himself from their allegiance to their employers. Before the three Consuls left England, it was thought desirable to get Waite and Littleton knighted by the King, presumably with the object of rehabilitating their reputations in India. The three set sail on board the three ships of the New Company with the titles of Presidents for the Presidencies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal, and with the knowledge that they would shortly be followed by Sir William Norris, member of Parliament for Liverpool, who had been appointed the King's Ambassador to the Great Mogul, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty, which might confer what privileges he could obtain for the New Company. No objection could well be taken by the Old Company to this appointment; but its utility was far from obvious. The only Ambassador who had been previously sent by an English Sovereign to India was Sir Thomas Roe, who had gone out to Delhi many years before during

the reign of James the First at a time when the Mogul's supremacy had not been challenged. Now that supremacy was tottering to its fall. Aurungzeb, at the age of eighty-one and in declining health, was engaged in the field against the Mahrattas, and very unlikely to be disposed to waste his time over what he must have regarded as the trumpery squabbles of the rival English traders, or to care much about the views of the King and Parliament of England as to their respective merits. Some time however had yet to elapse before he was troubled by the Ambassador, who instead of coming to Surat and proceeding thence by the direct route to the Mogul's camp, had been persuaded by Consul John Pitt to come first to the Coromandel Coast, where he was destined to be detained to his great disgust by one excuse or another for nearly a year.

There can be no doubt that the three King's Consuls and the Ambassador came out to India imbued with the notion that their commissions gave them indefinite but indisputable powers to enquire into and regulate the affairs of all English traders in the East, and their relations with the native authorities; and that their instructions and intentions were to exercise these powers after a very high-handed fashion, and to treat any attempt to question or belittle their authority as a grave offence and a contempt of the King's Majesty. In furtherance of this policy, Sir Nicholas Waite, the Consul who had been appointed to act for the Bombay Presidency, on arriving at Surat peremptorily commanded the President and Council of the Old Company to strike their flag, because he himself claimed to bear the commission of Vice-Admiral and would allow no other flag than his own to be hoisted by Englishmen in that port. In their refusal to comply with this order, President Colt and his Council were

supported by the Mogul Governor of Surat, who gave Waite clearly to understand that no commission of the King of England was of any authority at Surat, unless admitted by the Mogul; and that the Old Company had the Mogul's permission to use their flag[1]. Regardless of this intimation Waite landed a body of forty men, who took down the Old Company's flag by force. It was however subsequently reinstated by the Governor; and a series of protracted intrigues with the native authorities ensued, by means of which the servants of each Company endeavoured to outbid the other and to stop their rivals' trade. In the meanwhile the affairs of the Old Company in that part of India were thrown into the utmost danger and confusion.

Similar disasters might very well have been brought about in Madras and Bengal, if the chief officers of the Old Company there had not taken the responsibility of offering a prompt and firm resistance to the pretensions of the new Consuls. Fortunately the Governor of Fort St George, and the Old Company's agent at Chuttannuttee were both determined men, who knew the strength of their position, and could be relied upon to hold their own. The first of the two to come into collision with his opponent was Governor Pitt, whose cousin Consul John Pitt had orders to commence his trading operations at Masulipatam (then usually called Metchlepatam) some two or three hundred miles north of Fort St George, formerly the headquarters of the Old Company's trade, where at this time the Old Company had one of their subordinate factories. On his way thither the Consul anchored in the Madras Roads off Fort St George, with a view as he afterwards explained to make the Old Company's servants

[1] Bruce 3. 311.

"sensible to the extent of his commission." The Union Jack was hoisted on the Fort; but he took no notice of it, "not," as he and his council subsequently informed the Court of the New Company, "out of any disrespect (to the Old Company), but believing the Priviledge of wearing it in their fforts on this Coast ceas'd by Virtue of the late Act, and His Majesty's Royal Charter to the English Company, which only secured for the Old Company their Trade for three years, not Military Power, and if so, he thought the first salute was due to him, and accordingly sent a letter ashoar to the President to give him notice of his arrivall and character."

The letter in question was worded as follows:

"Sir,

I did by some of Early Shipps let you know that I had engag'd my Self in the service of the Honble English Company lately Settled by Act of Parliament, which determin'd yours in three years commencing last Michaelmas, and having gain'd the Coast cou'd not pass by without dropping our Anchor in Madrass Road, and wou'd salute you, had I not the Honour to bear his Majesties Commission, which constitutes me his Minister or Consull for the English Nation in Generall on the whole Coast of Cormandell, including all your Settlements. If you think fitt to pay the respect that is due to the Character with your fflag Lower'd, the Compliment shall be returned to you by

Sr. Your affect: Kinsman and Servant

J. P."

The superscription of this letter was "To the Honble Tho: Pitt Esqr, President for affaires for the Governor and Company of Merchts of London Trading yet to the East Indies by permission on the Coast of Coromandel."

To this letter the Governor at once sent the following reply[2]:

[1] Hedges 3. 42.

[2] Hedges 3. 41.

Fort St. George,
July 28. 1699.

" Sir,

I received yours the purport of which seems very odd as well as the Superscription. If you had read the Act of Parliament, and well consider'd it, you will find that it Establishes my Masters in all their rights and priviledges in these parts till 1701, and afterwards 'Tis secur'd to them by their Subscription, therefore you can have noe power in any place of their Settlements, nor shall I own any till I am Soe order'd by those that intrust me.

I am not unacquainted with what respect is due to the King's Consull, (whether you are one I know not) but you cannot ever have heard an Ancient Fortification wearing the King's Flagg shou'd lower it and Salute a reall Consull: but I take it to be your Obligation to have Saluted the Flagg ashore at your comeing to anchor, when wee Shou'd have answer'd according to custome and good manners.

What liquors[1] you have for me I desire you to send ashore in these Boats. You must expect to find me noe less zealous for my Masters' interest then you are for yours, and as you act, the same will be returned to you by

Sr, your affectionate Kinsman
and humble servant,
Tho. Pitt. Governour.

I find you are a Young Consull by the purport and superscription of your letter. I wish you had omitted it.

To John Pitt Esqr,
On board the Degrave."

This letter seems to have surprised and enraged its recipient, who wrote back:

" I am sorry to find the zeal for your Masters has Transported you beyond Sence and Good Manners. I shall Impute it in part to the heat of the Country, which has alter'd your Temper.

[1] N.B. The Governor seems to have taken it for granted that his cousin, whatever his other shortcomings might be, would not have omitted to bring him liquors. Whether he got any on this occasion does not appear. We may perhaps assume that he did; for we find from a subsequent letter, extracts from which are given below, that his displeasure did not go so far as to prevent him from sending the young Consul some wine that he had asked for. " You shall have," he says, " ten chests of Persian Wine sent you by the first oppertunity." Hedges 3. 49.

The young Consull as you term him gives you this advice, to mind the main Chance and not forfeit Old Sarum &ca and expose yourself to the World to boot: who I do assure you will much censure and blaim this rashness of yours, and let me tell you your Masters will neither Thank you and bear you out in it. I came later from England than your advices. J. P.

I shall send you your letters from Metchlepatam. You'l know in the End I am not to be taught my Duty by you. J. P.

July 28. 99.

I shall answer your Scurrilous Letter from Metchlepatam, and beleive me you'l wish you had never wrote in Such a Stile. I'le take such measures to make you Sencible that my Commission reaches over all your Settlements and you your Selfe shall be forc'd to own and publish it in all your Forts and Settlements and beg pardon for the affront offer'd to the Character of his Majesties Consull. J. P.

To Thos. Pitt Esq^r in Madrass."

On his arrival at Masulipatam, the young Consul found that the Old Company's factor and his colleagues there, acting no doubt on the instructions of his cousin the Governor, took no notice whatever of him. Whereupon he wrote to them acquainting them with the terms of his appointment, and summoning them to appear before him[1]. "You were not unsensible," he says, "of my Arrivall and what regard and respect is due to 't. This is therefore to will and require you in the King's Name to repair to our Factory tomorrow morning between 9 and 10, being the 8th instant August, Upon hoisting the Flagg, when I intend to open and read my Commission. I take this course that you nor any other of the English nation residing here may not plead Iggnorance. Therefore fail not to appear as you'l answer the Contrary at your Perill."

No attention seems to have been paid to this notice by the servants of the Old Company to whom it was addressed; and on being informed of what had occurred, the Governor of Fort St George and

[1] Hedges 3. 44.

his Council issued the following proclamation to all of the forts and factories in the Presidency.

"Wee the Governour President and Council of Fort St. George for affairs of the Right Honble the East India Company, being advised that Mr. John Pitt lately arrived at Metchlepatam has by a Summons wherein he Stiles him self the New Company's President and the Kings Consull for the Coast, directed to our Companys Factors there, wherein he seems to usurp an Authority over them, and to intermeddle with our Companys Affaires, the pernicious consequences of which being well Considered by us, have thought fitt to Send out these our orders to all our Forts, Castles, Towns and Factorys under this Presidency for the following reasons.

For that the Act of Parliament, which erects the New East India Company continues our Company Trade till September 1701, from whence wee Infer that they are to Enjoy all their Rights and Priviledges and there Governours, Presidents and Factorys to exercise all powers necessary for the supports of your Governments and Trade.

Moreover wee observe in the Act our Company are exempted from paying the five per Cent, which is for bearing the Charge of Embassadours and Consulls, from which wee likewise inferr that our Companys affairs nor Servants nor any Trading under there protection in these parts are under theire direction or controul.

Wherefore for the foregoing reasons and to prevent the great mischiefs that otherwise will undoubtedly attend our Masters affaires wee require all English in our Companys Service as allso all that live and Trade under their protection not to obey or regard any Summons or Orders that they shall receive from Mr. John Pitt or any one Else under the pretence of his being a President for the New Company or a Consull.

Wee resolve to persist in this opinion till his most Gracious Majesties Pleasure be Signified to us, or that our Honble Employers give us direction herein.

In Confirmation whereof Wee have here unto Sett our hands and the Seale of our Company At Fort St. George in the city of Maderasse This 23 day of August 1699.

Thomas Pitt.
Francis Ellis.
Ro. Braddyl.
Tho. Wright.
M. Empson.
Tho. Marshall.
Richard Watts."

It will be observed that the signature of Mr William Fraser, the second member of the Council, is not appended to this document. When it was issued, he was probably away at Fort St David, of which he was Deputy Governor, and where, as appears from a letter of the Court to Pitt, there had lately been what they describe as an "unlucky miscarriage," occasioned by his "unaccountable supineness," which had clearly in their opinion "proclaimed the want of Fit Genius to manage so important a Station[1]." If he had been at this time at Fort St George, it would have been in accordance with his usual custom of disapproving of the policy of the Governor for the time being, to have refused to sign this proclamation.

The long-winded wordy warfare which ensued between the Governor and his cousin has not survived in its entirety. Each man stuck to the position he had taken up, and abused the other roundly, interspersing his remarks with uncomplimentary references to his antagonist's antecedents and personal failings. In the course of this correspondence the Governor, who seems to have plumed himself on being a scrupulously polite letter-writer, takes exception to one of Consul Pitt's missives as containing "sundry expressions as if it had been dictated to him by the oyster wenches of Billingsgate[2]." But in this respect there does not seem to have been any marked difference between the two disputants. In the letter which contains this reproof, the Governor himself says in reply to the suggestion that he is hot-headed, "'Tis certain a great misfortune for any Society to have a hott brain'd President at the head of their affairs, but a farr greater to have a Crackbrained and Unexperienced President, who must undoubtedly in a little time

[1] Hedges 3. 37, 38. [2] Hedges 3. 73.

bring all into Confusion." The gist of his case and the kind of language in which it was conveyed to his opponent, may be gathered from the following extracts of a letter, which he sent to his cousin on the 17th of November in that year[1].

"The fable of the froggs Suits your present temper, and the Morall and reflexion I hope will make much impression on you Soe as to prevent your having the fate of the froggs. I recommend to you allsoe the reading and practising the fables of the Lion and the Mouse, and the Wolf and the Stork.

I find to Excuse your own miscarryage in this port, in not paying the respect due to the Kings fflagg, you seem to question our power to wear itt, and that we are not to be esteemed as Bombay, or St. Helena, to either of which I think wee have much the preheminence, for that wee are much more Considerable in all respects. I remember Bombay, St. Helena and all other ffortifications in these parts wore St. Georges fflag, and 'twas King James (who I suppose you'le own once had a power order'd that all fortifications belonging to the African or East India Company should wear his fflag......don't you know they have power to raise Soldiers for these parts, which is part of the Regall power; and 'tis no wonder the wearing his fflagg should goe with itt. The Honour of itt has, and shall be maintain'd during my time....

If you pass by here you must behave your Selfe very civilly, noe Drums, flaggs nor trumpets within our bounds, for here shall be but one Governour whilst I am here.

Your advice is very good, and I returne it to you, mind your trade, which is your Masters business, and when the Moors have bang'd you, and Stript you of what you have, upon your Submission and begging pardon for what you have done, I may chance to protect you here. I can't but laugh at your promising us protection; when you have neither forces, power nor Interest in the Countrey. When ours are assign'd you, you may talk at that rate.

I have Seen your Sugar Candy how-doe-you-doe letters to severall, all which will not doe.....You may lock up your Consulls Commission till my Masters time is expir'd...

I think I have now answer'd all your riff raff stuff, which I hope will be as tiresome to you to read as 't is to me to write... ..I order'd the Captain to bring me six horses, but he could not gett one. Capt. Brook brought me one which I bought of

[1] Hedges 3. 47.

him, which proves too good for you, and only fitt for me to ride. I have another, an Arab, but that is small. You shall have ten chests of Persian Wine sent you by the first oppertunity.

To Conclude this tedious letter I must tell you I am not unsensible how some of my Masters I now serve intended to have done basely by mee, and am not ignorant what prevented itt, yett for the sake of those that stood my past friends, I will not doe any thing, or any wise omitt what I ought, whereby to bring any blemish on them or my Selfe. Farewell."

The last paragraph of this letter is very characteristic of Thomas Pitt. On whichever side of a quarrel he took his stand, no employers of his ever had any reason to complain of his fidelity to their interests at any stage of his career. A few weeks before a friend of John Pitt at Fort St George had informed the Consul[1] that "Our present Governour is really of himself a very good man, and certainly very zealous to the Interest he espouses." It was always so with him. Nor was it his practice to try to undermine the allegiance of his opponent's servants, by writing what he calls "sugar candy how-doe-you-doe letters" to them. The following is a sample of these which his cousin had sent about this time with the object of inducing some of the men in the service of the Old Company or trading under its protection at Fort St George to come over to his side[2]:

"From Consul John Pitt to Mr. Betts at Madras

Dated Metchlepatam

August 14. 99.

Sr. I am come to India and intend to Settle in these parts; if you have a mind to ingage in the Service of the English Company trading to the East Indies lately Establish't I'le make it worth your while. Your Sallary will be £60 per annum all paid in the country, and I'le make your perquisites considerable. You know my Temper. I'le engage you'l get money as much as you can expect and you have a hearty wellcome from me

[1] Hedges 3. 46.

[2] Hedges 3. 45.

and if you dont like public business you shall be with me and fare as well whether you Embrace it or not if you come make hast Overland Your charges Shall be allow'd don't deny me if you doe you'l be your own Enemy.

This is the 2nd. I have wrot you. I am

Yours J. P."

In the face of this and similar letters it is not easy to justify the indignation which Mr John Pitt expresses when writing about the same time to another man at Fort St George whom he was approaching after much the same fashion[1]. "President Pitts dirty reflection upon our Honble Directors" he writes "was false and malicious, pray tell him from me they are Gentlemen of more Honour and the persons they have imploy'd, than to Intice any man in the Service of the Company of Merchants of London Trading to the East Indies. I wish he and his &cas would act soe too and not stave off Ballanceing acounts and giving discharges on purpose to ruine those who would then be at liberty to serve which interest they pleas'd."

In the meanwhile Sir Edward Littleton, the King's Consul for Bengal, was faring little better with the Old Company's President at Chuttannuttee than his colleague was in Madras with the Governor of Fort St George. Having arrived at Balasore, he wrote on the 29th of July, the day after John Pitt's lamentable fiasco in the Madras Roads, to Beard, the son of the John Beard who had come out to India with poor Hedges some 18 years before with the main object of frustrating Thomas Pitt's successful interloping expedition of 1681, a letter which clearly shows that the two Consuls had decided in concert the course which they should take with the Old Company's officials.

[1] Hedges 3. 47.

"Much Esteemed Friend," he writes[1], "The Generall herewith to your Self and those in Council Employ or Commission with you is not in the least from any disrespect to your Self, for whom I have no mean esteem, nor to any of the rest who are known to mee only by name or employ, but intirely to represent unto you the true state of the case, being it may be supposed you have not had any full account thereof from your employers except by the Antelope, this affair of the Consulship being transacted as I take it, cheifly after the departure of your ships, and to prevent any unhappy occurrence, which might otherwise perhaps succeed, nor is there any design in the least therein to embarrasse or obstruct the currency of your affaires, as in practice you will find, nor create any difference between us, but rather a firmer and stricter Friendship and correspondence, and will certainly prove so if no failure on your part, which I will not suspect. I must profess an absolute ignorance of your Employers orders or designes, but as a reall friend I do take upon myself to advise you that whereas upon the arrivall of Ships particular there hath been frequently application made to the Government against them, and odious calumnies cast upon them which probably may have caused recriminations and have all tended not only to the National prejudice, but even to Christianity itself. Wee are now come on Parliamentary Sanction, the greatest Authority our Nation affords, So may not expect any Such usage, however think it not amiss that you are warned thereof, for the resentment of our Employers for Such Actions may be such as may cause the end to prove very bitter and possibly fatall to the Actors, nor can you think but wee Shall be as vegorous on our part, as you Shall be Vehement on yours nor will our hands wax weaker but Stronger Dayly.

The affaires of the Durbar with respect to the English Intrest will center in the Consull, So to be foreborne by all others, also all Passes for Ships, So that you will do well to let Such know thereof least they do bring them Selves under some disappointment.

You must needs know that at our first coming wee are to Seek for needfull things, especially Small vessels and Pilots. I am not for withdrawing any Mens Servants against their Masters consent, but yet had rather our own Countreymen do reap the benefit than aliens. So that if you think not fit to Spare any your Self yet it may not be imprudent not to hinder any others that should be willing thereto. Know not how to Speak so plain in this matter as otherwise I might being a stranger to your circumstances and directions, but am well assured

[1] Hedges 2. 206.

nothing will be done of service to our Employers by any persons but will Surely meet with very gratefull acceptance and remuneration.

I ad not more. Let not what is offered with the Right hand be received with the Left, I am

Your reall friend and humble Servant
Edward Littleton."

Beard's reply to this letter has apparently not been preserved. But its purport may be inferred from a letter which he and his Council sent to Surat, dated the 9th of August[1]. "The 4th of last month the Antelope arrived in Ballasore Road with S^r^ Edward Littleton, President for the New Company's affaires, and he says Consull for the English Nation, having the King's Commission....Our answer to him in generall that we will espouse our Masters Interest according to orders received from them, and thought it (more) proper to manage the Durbar business for our R^t^ H.M.'s Affaires than to address him, since we had better footing...withall we assur'd him we would not represent his Interest in false colours to the Gov^t^, as his ffriends had maliciously done our Masters in Suratt, yet if he begun we would not cross cudgels with any contenders. We are not at all surprised with these matters, which may make a noise for a time, and att last a trade will center in the old bottom again."

When Littleton arrived at Hugli, he seems to have had further reason to complain of the Old Company's officials; for in a letter which he wrote to the Duke of Somerset in the following January he says[2]:

"As soon as I arrived in these parts I gave Notice to the Gentlemen residing here on behalfe of the Old East India Company of the Character his Gracious Majesty was pleased to give mee, but in answer they tooke noe notice of his Majestys

[1] Hedges 2. 208. [2] Hedges 2. 207.

Character, but to disowne any power his Majesty had on that account, and would owne noe authority but what came from their Masters. Upon my comeing up to this place I passed by their Chiefe Factory, and having his Majesty's Flagg at the Top of our Mast, they were soe far from taking notice thereof in the Least, that tho' its usual for them to spread their Colours on the Least Vessels passing by, Yett now in mere affront to the Consular Dignity they not only forebore to spread any Colours themselves, but prevented all Shipps of English there, of which there were diverse, from taking any notice of the Kings Flagg alwayes used heretofore, and they having at the time a Servant of the New Company in their Factory, on his Complaint, I sent two of my Company to demand his Liberty which was not only refused: but on the 20th September, being three days after, fixes a pestilent Paper upon the Gate of the Factory, of very trayterous import, a true Copy whereof goes with this by which Your Highness will perceive what Sorte of Subjects the English in the Old Companies Service are, and his Majesty will alsoe see how much his authority is here Vilified by those to whome on many accounts he had been exceedingly gracious, even to Admiration."

The pestilent paper of very traitorous import, to which Littleton here refers, was probably the proclamation issued by Governor Pitt and his Council. If so, the Company's servants at their Hugli factory had no option but to publish it, though their doing so may well have been very unpleasing to Littleton. It is clear that the Governor and Beard were acting in concert together throughout this business, and that Beard's action met with the full approval of the Governor, who wrote to him shortly afterwards, "You did very well in Standing up against Sir Edward, and not permitt him to concerne him selfe with our Masters affairs, which are not within his power, for I assure you lett them be Ambassador or Consulls, or whatever Characters they have, they shall not concerne themselves within my precinct. Our Masters have not wrote us one word, in Generall or particular, concerning these new authoritys[1]."

[1] Hedges 3. 50.

It would appear from another letter written to Beard about a year afterwards that Pitt had himself gone so far as to write to Littleton[1]. "He has most Certainly," he says, "taken some disgust at me, for I wrote him a letter last year by Captain Wesley and Sent him a handsome present to which I never had any answer. I remember I rub'd a little upon his Knighthood and Consullship at which I suppose he was angry." It is not unlikely that he was.

No policy could have been more judicious or more disconcerting to his opponents than the bold and simple one which Governor Pitt had adopted in this crisis. He seems to have entertained no doubt himself that he was acting strictly within his legal rights; and the "pestilent paper," which he had promulgated throughout the Old Company's settlements in Madras and Bengal, was a clear and carefully reasoned statement, couched in unmistakeable terms, of what he believed those rights to be, and why he considered it his duty to his employers to enforce them, and to forbid his subordinates to obey or regard any order or summons from Mr John Pitt or any one else under the pretence of his being a President for the New Company or a King's Consul. He and his Council had taken upon themselves the full responsibility of stamping John Pitt and Sir Edward Littleton as impostors, claiming to exercise powers which neither Parliament nor the King had given them. And he had directed them to be so regarded, until his Most Gracious Majesty's pleasure to the contrary was signified to him, or he had received instructions from his employers, informing him that he was wrong. He knew of course that some six months at least must elapse before the home authorities could learn what he had done; that if any doubts were entertained of the

[1] Hedges 3. 67.

legality of the course he was pursuing, a further delay of incalculable duration was inevitable, whilst the English courts of law were determining whether the interpretation which he had placed on the recent Act was right or wrong; and that assuming that they were to decide against him, another six months would pass before their decision could reach him. It was therefore very unlikely that he would be forced to retire from the position he had taken up before the expiration of the three years' grace allowed to the Old Company by Parliament. In the meanwhile he might not unreasonably expect that the position of the two unlucky Consuls would become more and more intolerable. Denounced publicly as impostors, and subjected in private to the humiliation of his insolent jibes and jeers, short of funds, with no military forces at their disposal, without credit amongst strangers only too disposed to distrust and deceive them, without even any fixed establishments, boycotted by their fellow countrymen, whom they had come out ostensibly to protect but in reality to persecute, what were their chances of competing successfully in trade with the Old Company, trafficking as they were with the cargoes of two ships only and hampered with the cost of an Embassy, whilst their rivals, exempted by Act of Parliament from any liability to contribute to those expenses, stimulated to unprecedented exertions and determined to make hay whilst their sun still shone, had sent out to India that year a larger number of cargoes than they had ever done before? The result of such a contest could admit of little doubt. The damage done in Bombay to the Old Company's cause by the tame submission of their officials to the high-handed proceedings of Waite would be more than compensated by the large gains the Company would make by their trade in Madras and Bengal,

and the prestige arising from the discomfiture of the King's Consuls on that side of India. Thus far the new Governor of Fort St George had scored a distinct success, and amply justified the confidence placed in him by his supporters, who had appointed him notwithstanding the opposition of Sir Josiah Child. "Roughling" he might be. But it was no time to mince his words. On no occasion throughout his career was his rough, plain speaking more justifiable or productive of better results.

# CHAPTER X

## THE EMBASSY TO THE GREAT MOGUL

Governor Pitt's proclamation to all the forts and factories in his Presidency, denouncing the King's Consul for Madras as an impostor, and forbidding the Old Company's servants to obey or regard any of his orders was dated the 23rd of August 1699. A month later Sir William Norris, the King's Ambassador, arrived in state off Masulipatam on board one of his Majesty's ships and accompanied by three other men-of-war. He was a man of much higher consideration and repute in England than either John Pitt or Littleton; and he was by no means disposed to underrate his personal importance or the dignity of his present office. But he laboured under the very serious disadvantage of having had no previous experience of India and its inhabitants. From a direction[1] given by him to John Pitt, on his arrival at Masulipatam, to pay Captain Warren, the Commodore of the squadron, a gratuity of 500 dollars for his "signall kindness," "and for his great service and fidelity to the New Company and their interest," it would seem that Norris hoped that the services of that officer would be available to support him in any emergency, so long as the ships remained on that coast.

It is noteworthy, however, that although on his way to Masulipatam he had put into Madras Roads[2],

[1] Hedges 3. 53.

[2] Bruce 3. 345.

where he was respectfully saluted by the Fort, he had refrained from landing there, for fear the captains of the fleet, which was conducting him, might be influenced against the New Company, by Governor Pitt and his Council.

Up to this time the Old Company's servants at Masulipatam, acting under their Governor's orders, had kept the newcomers at arm's length. But emboldened by the sight of the four King's ships, the King's Consul now resumed his overtures to Mr Thomas Lovell, the Chief of the Old Company's factory, with better results than heretofore. He wrote on the 21st of September, when the ships were in sight, the following letter to Lovell[1]:

"Sr: Tho you were so rude not to let me have your Company at my Landing, and so impudent, I will not give it a worse name, not to take notice of the Sumons I sent you to appear at our Factory when I read my Commission, yet I shall not omitt giving you notice of the arrivall of his Excellency Sr. Wm. Norris Barronet Ambassador Extraordinary from the King of England to the Great Mogull convey'd by 4 Men of Warr, and that he designs to come ashore in a day or two, and expects that you and the rest of the English belonging too and resideing in your Factory doe make your appearance at his Landing, to pay your duty and attend him to his Lodgings, let me advice you as a friend not to omitt it, for your neglect will be taken for contempt, and greater Inconveniencys will follow upon't then you are aware of.

Your father was very instrumentall in Saveing the life of an accquaintance of mine which I Shall allways own, and would not have you run your Self into a Nooze for want of a little good advice from

J. Pitt."

To this letter Lovell sent the following reply, the complaisant tone of which was no doubt to some extent due to the sight of the four ships of the King's Navy in the offing, and the fear that if he continued recalcitrant, he might possibly be

[1] Hedges 3. 53.

sent home a prisoner on one of them, a fate which, as will be seen, he very narrowly escaped afterwards.

"Honble Sr,

Last night I received your paper bearing date the 21st instant, chargeing me with Rudeness and Impudence in not obeying your former Summons. I hope the copy of the order[1], which comes herewith will clear me of 't.

I shall undoubtedly pay my respects to his Excellency Sr Wm Norris at his Landing, if you will please to let me know the day, and time he designs to come.

I am heartily Glad my father hath Serv'd you in any thing to deserve your favour, and it would be an unspeakable Joy to me could I doe the same, and show you how much I am

Honble Sr:

Your most humble servant,

Thos Lovell."

On the same day the following letter was addressed by the Ambassador to Consul Pitt and his Council "from on board His Majesties Shipp Harwich, riding att Anchor in the Roads before Metchlepatam on the Coast of Coromandell, the 23rd of September 1699[2]."

"Honrd Gentlemen,

I thought it Necessary to take the first Oppertunity to Signify to you my Arrivall on the Coast, which was (with the Squadron under the Comand of Comadore Warren) on the 20th instant about Six in the evening, And on Munday next I intend to disembarque.

This comes by a Shipp in the Service of the Old Company wherefor I think itt not expedient to say anything further than that I am,

Honrd Gentlemen,

Your humble servant

Wm. Norris.

All possible provision is makeing (by the Governor in Chiefe of the Province under the Great Mogull) for my Reception,

[1] This order was probably the proclamation issued by Governor Pitt and his Council and set out on page 153.

[2] Hedges 3. 52.

with Great Grandure and all Imaginable Demonstrations of ffriendship. A Supply of Wine and Strong Beer will bee Necessary by the first Oppertunity."

It would seem from this extraordinary postscript that the unfortunate Ambassador had actually been deluded by some one into the belief that when he landed at the small, out-of-the-way station at Masulipatam, he would find the Governor in Chief of the Province waiting to receive him and conduct him in pomp to the camp of the Mogul. Nor did the reply which the Consul sent him contain anything to remove this delusion on his part.

"My Lord," it begins, "Shall get all things ready for your Lordships reception on Monday and will advise You tomorrow what hour of the day will be best to Land.

If your Excellency pleases in my opinion 'twill be best to have only a Cold treat, and the Severall tables ready spread Cover'd upon your Arrivall, for 'twill be impossible to hitt the time so exactly as to have it hott and in Order besides 'twill be expected it shou'd be done with a deal of more Ceremony than what circumstances will admitt, for your Excellency cannot but be Sensible Wee must be in a little hurry, not being Yet well Settled, and everybody with me unacquainted with India.

I am, My Lord,

Your Excellencys most humble Servant

J. Pitt.

Metchlepatam. 23 7br. 99."

Thankful as the Ambassador must have been to find himself on shore once more at the end of his long and tedious voyage, he must have been grievously disappointed on landing not to find the great Indian officer of state whom he had expected waiting to receive him. Nor is it likely that such accommodation as John Pitt had been able to provide for him came up to his lordly expectations. Such as it was, it would probably have been worse, if at the last moment Lovell and the other Englishmen from

the Old Company's factory had not been pressed to supply some of the most urgent necessaries for the Ambassador and his retinue, including the wine and strong beer for which he seems to have stood in such pressing need. For some time to come Lovell and his men were probably anxious to propitiate the great man. Their position was by no means an enviable one. On the one hand any kindness or attention they might show him and his suite would certainly be reported to and very likely misconstrued by their master, the Governor of Fort St George, who was not a man to be trifled with. On the other hand so long as the four men-of-war were within calling distance, the poor men must have remained in imminent danger of being arrested and put in irons, if they neglected to comply with any of the Ambassador's requirements. In the circumstances the probability is that they yielded to his demands and orders, and reported all that occurred to the Governor of Fort St George.

In choosing Masulipatam instead of Surat as his starting point for the Mogul's camp, Norris had evidently been grossly misled by John Pitt. As the latter frankly confesses in the above letter, everybody with him was unacquainted with India; and as a matter of fact he had not as yet been successful in inducing any one of the Old Company's servants at Fort St George to come over to his side. The only shadow of an excuse that he seems to have had for pretending that he possessed any qualifications for arranging for the Ambassador's progress to the camp of the Mogul from this part of India was that[1] seven years before, in 1692, he and another subordinate servant of the Company, Mr Trenchfield, had been entrusted by Governor Yale to carry a present of 15,000 rupees to the Mogul's general,

[1] Wheeler I. 247.

Zulficar Khan at Gingi, and to bring back a firman, conferring certain privileges on the Old East India Company and the Governor and Council of Fort St George. Yale had very judiciously assisted the Mogul's forces when engaged in their war with the King of Golconda, by supplying them with ammunition and stores; and on the successful termination of hostilities Zulficar Khan had in requital for this service obtained a firman from the Mogul's Vizier, Asad Khan, conferring the privileges in question. On the strength of the fact that he and another young man had conveyed the rupees and brought back the treaty, John Pitt seems to have posed in England as a successful Eastern diplomatist and a *persona grata* to the victorious general; and to have persuaded the Ambassador to select Masulipatam instead of Surat as the starting point for his embassy, thereby most unfortunately for the New Company bringing him within the sphere of influence of Governor Pitt instead of that of Sir John Gayer.

Some three and a half months after Norris had been left at Masulipatam, the following letter was addressed to Zulficar Khan by the Consul, with the approval, it is to be presumed, of the Ambassador[1].

"John Pitt &c[a]

To the Victorious and Noble Navob Zulfiker Cawne.

When your Excellency lay before Chingee I was introduced into Your Presence by Emaun Coly Begue and received a Grant of everything I desir'd from Your Excellency, which Goodness and Condescention shall never be forgotten, and for which I have ever Since wish'd Your Excellency Success in Armes, Health, prosperity and long life. Emaun Coly Begue has been so Kind as to acquaint you with the Arrivall of his Excellency My Lord Ambassador Extraordinary from the King of England &c[a]: and to make known to you what the import of my Letter to him was, which was very great in your

[1] Hedges 3. 54.

Excellency so far to comply with, and beyond all expectation to part with so Trusty a Confident and necessary a Man as Emaun Coly is to You: no person would have done it but Your Noble Self. His Excellency My Lord Ambassadore admires your Generousity so readily to write to Court to Notifie his Arrivall, and requesting his Majesty's orders and the Great Navob Assid Cawns Phirwanna, and longs to have a Sight of your Person to tell Your Excellency how much hee's oblig'd to You. Your Excellency will find My Lord Ambassadore A Man of Honor and worth, who knows how to return so great a favour with thanks, and Your Excellency may be assur'd he'l do't, and in the mean time he'l receive Emaun Coly Begue as your Excellencys friend. My Lord gives his humble Service to your Excellency and desires his gratitude may be known, and humble service given to the Great Navob.

Salam.

Metchlepatam the 10th Jan$^{y}$ 1699[1]."

This letter seems to have been concocted mainly for the purpose of leading the Ambassador to believe that John Pitt was in close touch with Zulficar Khan, and Eman Cooli Beg, who was to act as emissary in this business[2]. Norris subsequently had good reason to doubt the latter's honesty, and that of his colleague, Vincatadre, Consul Pitt's dubash or chief merchant who had come from Fort St George to Masulipatam shortly after the Consul's arrival there, and had been for many years in the employ of the Old Company. Norris expresses a strong opinion that both men were still in the pay of Governor Pitt, and calls them "villanous fellows," and says "the treachery of both of them is as clear to me as noon day[3]." In any case this letter was unlikely, unless accompanied with a more substantial present than John Pitt could afford to send, to induce Zulficar to throw over the Governor of Fort St George, who was the only official with whom all

[1] This date should evidently have been 1700. According to the old style it would be properly written "1699–1700."

[2] *Fifteenth Report of Historical Manuscripts Commission.* Appendix x. 81.

[3] Hedges 3. 58.

former treaties relating to the English trade in Madras had been made, and who had not been backward in the past in paying handsomely for them. The Ambassador was to him an unknown personage recommended by a mere clerk, whose only claim to recognition was that he had once some seven years before been admitted into Zulficar's presence, as one of the bearers of a gift of 15,000 rupees from the Governor of Fort St George. As a matter of fact it is clear that the letter, if it ever reached Zulficar, had little, if any, practical effect. In the meanwhile Governor Pitt was probably fully aware of what was going on. He had all the existing treaties in his possession. His cousin John had written fruitlessly for copies of them, first from Elihu Yale, who had left Fort St George before the Consul's letter reached its destination, and afterwards from his old acquaintance Trenchfield, who, whilst agreeing as to the importance of any Embassy proceeding to the Mogul's camp being made aware of their contents, had very properly informed the Consul that he must know that it was impossible to comply with his request[1]. That Governor Pitt had himself taken some steps to frustrate his cousin's plans is clear from his letter of the 11th of February 1700 to the Court of the Old Company, in which he says[2]:

"I shall not trouble you with much relation about the Ambassador, being unable to committ in paper some services I have done you, which I am forc'd to keep as Secrets here for fear of haveing some turn Informers and Come Evidence against me, he is still in Metchlepatam making great preparations for his going up to the King the latter end of next month, when I shall take care to have the best information I can of all the proceedings. And I hope to write to you hereafter that they have not been able to doe you much harm, tho they speake very bigg and threaten hard, and 'tis said they dont doubt but

[1] Hedges 2. 288. [2] Hedges 3. 50.

to see us call'd to an account for all moneys rais'd by way of revenue in the Mogulls dominions: 'tis Certain if they dont hear of a Conjunction[1] they will endeavour your entire ruine, and 'tis as certaine I will defend and support your cause, and doe as much as if the whole concerne was my owne."

In the meanwhile the Ambassador had issued the following notice[2] to the Agency at Masulipatam: "This is to require and command you not to presume to make any address or application, either in your own person or by any other, directly or indirectly to any public minister or officer of the Great Mogul, without my knowledge or permission, as you will answer the contrary at your peril. Given at Metchlepatam December 26th 1699. William Norris."

On this being reported to the Governor and his Council they at once sent the Ambassador the following letter[3]:

"To His Excellency S^r^ William Norris Barr^t^ Embassador to the Great Mogull at Metchlepatam.

S^r^,

Wee having been informed by Mr. Thomas Lovell, our Companys ffactor at Metchlepatam, that upon the approaching of the new Nabob, who is come to Govern that Country, you sent for him and deliver'd him a Paper, requiring and commanding him in a most extraordinary manner, not to make any applycation to any of the Mogulls officers (for the better carrying on our affairs) without your leave and Permission, threatening to do no less than send him home in Irons, from which we Immagine you resolve the utter ruine of our Company hopeing thereby to promote the Interest of your Employers, the New East India Company.

Wee having no Orders or Instructions to Govern ourselves in this matter but the Act of Parliament, which in Perusing wee find that there is five per Cent laid on all Goods for the Maintaining Embassadors and Consuls, from which our Company's excepted till September 1701, which Embassadors and Consulls are to be nominated and Elected by the Directors of the New Company and sent to such Emperor or Prince in these parts as they please, and they to pay the Charge out of the

[1] That is of the two rival Companies.
[2] Wheeler 1. 349.
[3] Hedges 3. 54.

five per Cent, and the remainder to be divided between the adventurers, and in a Subsequent Clause 'tis said that nothing in this Act shall be Constru'd to extend to hinder or restrain our Companys Trade till the 29th of September 1701. Soe that they being excus'd from contributing to the Charge of Embassadors, Consulls &ca, certainly 'twas never intended that their affairs in these parts should be subjected to the direction or Control of the New Companys Embassadors Consulls or Agents dureing their limited time, wee being possesst as the rightfull and Lawfull Proprietors of all Phirmaunds and Grants necessary for Supporting the Trade which has been procured at vast expenses, and without corresponding with the Government 'tis impossible to support our Privileges.

S^r^, Wee think your proceedings not only destructive to our Masters at Present, but will also prove fatall hereafter: if not entail a perpetual ruin on the Trade. To prevent the Mischeif that may attend us, and preserve the Interest for which wee are Concern'd, we must acquaint you that we resolve to persist in Corresponding with the Government as formerly for the carrying on of our Trade dureing the Time Limited by Parliament, and Order all our Companys Chiefs and ffactors under this Presidency to do the Same untill his Majestie Commands the contrary, or that we receive orders from our Company.

As for the Injuries you have already done our Company and others of the Kings subjects, by Embargoing their Ships, (who traded here under their protection) wee doubt not but that they will represent it in such places where they may find a remedy and Justice. In Confirmation whereof, wee have hereunto sett our hands and the Seal of our Company at Fort St. George in the City of Madrass, this 16th day of January $\frac{1699}{1700}$.

Thos. Pitt.
Francis Ellis.
R. Braddyl.
M. Simpson.
Thom^s^ Marshall.
John Meverell."

Norris appears to have sent no rejoinder to this forcible letter, which he must have found very difficult to answer. Some months afterwards his continued coercion and intimidation of the Old Company's servants at Masulipatam led Governor Pitt and his Council to take a more decisive step which effectively stopped him and his Consul from

any more bullying of this kind. They passed a resolution at Fort St George on the 12th of July 1700[1] to make all their subordinate factories "as formidable as possible in order to preserve their Masters' interest and to protect the persons of their servants from any injustice"; and in pursuance of this resolution despatched 24 soldiers with a lieutenant, sergeant and corporal to Masulipatam to be under the command of the Chief and Council there. The arrival of these guards relieved Lovell and his men from any further fear of violence at the hands of the Ambassador and his Consul.

A month later Norris finally abandoned his design of making Masulipatam the starting point of his Embassy, and left the Coromandel coast for good, proceeding by sea to Surat. It would seem from the Diary of Mr Tillard, the second in command of the New Company's Council at Masulipatam, that the reasons which finally determined him to take this course were the refusal of the local Nawabs to give him passes and assistance, and the setting in of the rainy season. He left the town with his retinue in great state in the midst of a grand procession[2]. In the following letter of the 19th of August 1700 to the Court of Directors of the New Company, he has left on record his opinion of Consul Pitt and his two chief advisers[3].

"ffrom on board the *Summers* in
Metchlepatam Road
August 19th 1700.

You may well be surprised to find me in the Road of Metchlepatam, on board the Summers, and may rather believe that I have been at the Camp, and finished the Embassy, and am now on my Returne for England, than that I am going to

[1] Wheeler I. 351.

[2] *Fifteenth Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission*, Appendix x. 85.

[3] Hedges 3. 57.

Suratt, in order to gett to the Camp, which as matters have been ordered and contrived, could not be effected from this place, as well as by the Delays and Treachery of those supposed by some to be our best ffriends, as by the Refusall of the Governour to obey the Mogulls Dusticks.

When I wrote to you last by the Degrave, I was of opinion, it might be well advis'd, on some Accounts, that I was directed to land here and was promis'd then I should have everything in readiness to sett forward, in a little time, but not long after was convinc't by many circumstances (as far fatall to the Designe of the Embassy, and my Negotiation as Delayes could make them) that it was very unfortunate I was ever directed to come to this wretched place, and much worse advised to stay here, to which add a greater misfortune than both these, that for some Months past I could not depend upon that Advice I was instructed to follow, in this I mean chiefly the Advice of your president, for he alone, having had some Experience of the Country, had cheifly the management of the Embassy left to him....but entrusted and put them in such hands that I soon found, acted more for the Old Companyes Interest then ours, and I doubted not had been sufficiently brib'd to doe soe."

Referring to Eman Cooli Beg and Vincatadre he goes on to say:

" Notwithstanding the Treachery of both of them is as plain to me as the noon day, they are both still entrusted and employed by the Consull and wee had noe other way left to ridd our Selves from this place, then by taking the oppertunity of the first convenient Shipp to embarque with our presents, Equipage, baggage &ca for Suratt, and ever since that Resolution taken these villanous Fellows have used all Artifices and contrivances and left noe Stone unturned, to divert us from pursuing this method, which alone was effectuall to break all their Measures; the Governours themselves, who by Briberyes have been induced to disobey the Mogulls orders, are soe alarmed at my going to Suratt, which was the only way I ever had of quitting this place, and getting to the Camp, and informing the Mogull of their proceedings (that they) have used all possible means and endeavours to divert me from it, but neither their Threats nor their promises nor fear of the Loss of their heads should prevaile with me to alter my resolution.....

How I have acted both for the Kings and the Nations honour and Your Intrest, I leave you to judge, when you are thoroughly apprized of all particulars, in the meanwhile must acquaint you, and cannot doe it but with great concern, that

I have mett with more Difficulties and Disappointments than I could imagin; and have laboured under those hardshipps it was impossible almost to expect; I hope now I am on board I have overcome them, and all will end for the best, and those Designes and Artifices, that have been used for our Delay, and practized hitherto with success, by the Method taken may turn to your advantage, but I must informe you, as pressing as your President and Councill at Suratt were, for my embarquing thither in order for my more honourable and quick dispatch to the Camp, upon advices received, how matters were transacted, Your president here has acted as much to the contrary, the other way. I was sorry to see him and the Governours that had been bribed to disobey the Mogulls Orders still all along pressing the same thing. But it is not only in this particular, but in many others, that I have suspected the Consull here, not to act for your Intrest, as far as the good success of the Embassy may be conducing to it. The Consull himself is well aware I suspect him, having spoken my mind very freely to him, as I thought it My Duty on severall occasions, and has acted in despite of whatever has been said to him, in relation to Vincatadre, whom he still retains, his Merchant, Chiefe Dubash and Councill, notwithstanding the Manifest instances I have given of his Treachery, and long since warned him from My presence, which has given more besides me, occasion to suspect them both involved in the Intrest they were formerly engaged in at Fort St. George and too close linked to disunite. Whether he came preingaged by the Old Company, to act as he has done, in relation to this Embassy, or whether being disappointed of putting vast quantityes of his own Goods brought from England with that Intent, and some other of his ffriends at Fort St. George, to a vast amount (in order to augment the presents, which I was at my first Landing given to understand were very defective) which were often prest upon me to take, and he would answer for the Advice and expence which were both Soe extraordinary, that I absolutely refused to have anything to do with it; whether this disappointment, with some others, may have sour'd him I know not, but I must freely own, I think he has not acted with regard to your Intrest in relation to the Embassy, whatever he has done in other matters."

The departure of Norris for Surat must have been a great relief to Governor Pitt. So long as the Ambassador remained in his Presidency, there was always some fear that Warren's squadron might at any time return, with orders possibly from the

Home Government which might compel the Governor to abandon his attitude of hostility to the New Company and their servants, or even authorise Warren to bring him back to England to stand a trial for his conduct. For the Old Company, though stronger in India, were weaker in London than their rivals. Pitt was the first but by no means the last Governor in India who had before his eyes the fear not only of his employers, but also of the English Government for the time being. Had the Embassy in its march from Masulipatam to the camp of the Mogul met with any disaster, he would assuredly have been called to account. Now that it had gone off to Bombay, these dangers were over for the present, and he might well afford to disregard the risk of any material injury that his cousin could do to him in Madras. That poor man, discredited in the eyes of his employers, had been left in a piteous condition at Masulipatam, short of funds and overawed by the presence of the soldiers, whom the Governor had sent there to protect the Old Company's servants. The position of Littleton at Hugli was little better. All that remained to be done to complete the discomfiture of both was to leave them severely alone. But there was always looming in the distance the possibility of the intervention of the Home Government, whose credit was concerned in the support of the capitalists, who had been led to advance their two millions on the understanding that they would thereby obtain the monopoly of the Eastern trade. It would be very difficult for the King's Ministers to get another loan if the subscribers to the former one did not obtain an adequate return for their money. Governor Pitt was not likely to overlook this aspect of the situation, although for the present he seems not unnaturally to have been elated with

the success which he had achieved. Writing a month after the departure of the Ambassador to an old friend (Sir Henry Johnson) he says, "I will not trouble you with news—only tell you that Fort St George is in the same place I found it, notwithstanding the bounceing of Ambassadors and Consulls. They give out that I am a dead man in the Eye of the Law, and they say that one of the Kings frigatts is to fetch me home, and that there will be Mandamuses and the Lord knows what, but lett them Say what they will, I am sure they can prove nothing[1]." Before this letter could have reached its destination, his employers had written giving him hearty assurances of their approval and support. In a letter of the 17th of January 1701 they say, "We are now come to the last part of yours, your assurances of firm adhering to our Interests. We are convinced of it to the last degree, and on our part give you our thanks for the zeal, courage and fidelity you have shown, and do Assure you, That we hold ourselves obliged to take such care of you as to render you Safe from any of those consequences our Enemies vainly threaten you withall[2]."

It would seem indeed from a letter which he wrote to Sir Stephen Evans, that there had been some talk of the Company's buying him a Baronetship or a gold bowl in recognition of his services. For he says, "I am very glad, if what I have done is to my masters satisfaction, and their bare thanks to me is of far greater value than a Barronetship, thô the gold bowle would not have been amisse, and should have esteem'd it an honour beyond my merrit, for I am sure the worst of my enemies can't say that I have left any stone unturned to promote and serve their honours Interest; but I suppose that

[1] Hedges 3. 64. [2] Hedges 3. 65.

gold bowle mistook its way, and is gone to Surat or Some other port, where they better deserve it, for I have not heard one word of it but from you[1]." How far the Company's servants at Surat deserved the gold bowl will appear in the next chapter.

[1] Hedges 3. 68.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE END OF THE EMBASSY

THE misfortunes of the great embassy to the Mogul from which so much had been expected by the New Company, were far from ended when Sir William Norris and his costly retinue left Masulipatam for Surat. Their voyage was anything but an agreeable one. It began on the 23rd of August, and Surat was not reached till the 10th of December. Writing to the Court of the New Company from St John's on the 5th of the latter month, the Ambassador complains that he has had to beat all the way against the wind. "This ffatigue," he says, "to me and Charge and disappointment to you I must impute to your President at Metchlepatam, of whom I shall say Nothing further[1]." He may not unreasonably have hoped that Sir Nicholas Waite, the King's Consul for the Bombay Presidency, who had urged him to come to Surat and represented to him the absurdity of trying to reach the Mogul's camp from the coast of Coromandel, would serve him better than poor John Pitt had done. But if he entertained any such expectation, he was doomed to bitter disappointment. The difficulties confronting both Companies, in common with all European traders on the Western shores of India, were greatly aggravated by the prevalence of Portuguese and English speaking pirates, who persistently preyed

[1] Hedges 3. 60.

upon the native commerce on its route to Persia and the Red Sea. For years past the European traders had been suspected by the Mogul of collusion with this piracy, and had been held by him accountable for it. An arrangement had recently been entered into by which the protection of the Red Sea had been assigned to the Dutch, that of the Persian Gulf to the French, and that of the Southern Indian Seas to the English[1]; and large sums had been expended by each of these nationalities with the object of putting down the pirates. Shortly before Waite's arrival from England, the Mogul had issued an order to stop European trade at all his ports until security had been given by the Agents of the English, French and Dutch factories to pay for certain piracies on the Western coast of India; and in the meanwhile an embargo had been placed on their ships at Surat, and no European was permitted to leave the town[2]. In this position of affairs Waite had arrived there in January 1700, whilst Norris was still at Masulipatam. The situation was a very serious one, and called for delicate and skilful diplomatic handling. It might well have baffled a far abler man than Waite. But it would be difficult to conceive any line of action more certain to injure permanently the English trade in that part of India, or to embarrass the Ambassador in the successful conduct of his mission, than that which Waite had taken. His main object seems to have been to inflict the greatest possible injury on the servants of the Old Company and to discredit them in the eyes of the native rulers of India, regardless of the fact, of which he should have been well aware, that negotiations were pending in London for the union of the two Companies, and the consideration that if he was successful in blackening

[1] Bruce 3. 275. [2] Bruce 3. 307.

the characters of such of his fellow countrymen as had hitherto been engaged in the India trade, the discredit would inevitably recoil on himself and English traders in general, to say nothing of the opportunity he was giving to the native rulers of playing off one Company against the other, and increasing their demands on both. His high-handed attempt to prevent the English flag from being hoisted on the Old Company's factory has already been narrated. His next step was to write to the Mogul accusing the servants of the Old Company of being thieves and confederates of the pirates[1], an accusation which promptly elicited from that great potentate, who had long entertained suspicions of the good faith of the efforts alleged to have been made by the European merchants to suppress piracy, a peremptory mandate that no servant of the Old Company should be permitted to leave the town on any pretext whatsoever[2]. The English squadron which had conveyed the Ambassador to Masulipatam was at this juncture off the Western Coast; and President Colt and the Council of the Old Company at Surat appealed to its Commander for protection. Captain Warren was now dead. His successor, Captain Littleton, seems to have done his best to treat the servants of the two Companies with impartiality. But the Mogul's orders on this occasion were too explicit to justify his interference; and as a last resource the Old Company's Council induced Sir John Gayer, the Governor of the Presidency, to leave his fort at Bombay and come to Surat with the object of adjusting the differences that had arisen between themselves and Waite; a summons to which, most unfortunately for himself, he at once responded by hastening to Surat with his wife, Lady

[1] Bruce 3. 371.
[2] Hunter 2. 342.

Gayer, without taking with him a sufficient escort to protect himself and his suite from Waite. He reached Surat about a month before the arrival of Sir William Norris and his retinue. In the meanwhile Waite, usurping the functions of the Ambassador, had on his own initiative entered into negotiations with the Mogul, offering on behalf of the New Company to give security for the safe navigation of the Coast trade[1], and guarantees for the suppression of the pirates, an offer which he had no authority whatever to make, and which he communicated neither to the Court of his Company nor to the Ambassador[2].

Such was the position of affairs, which the Ambassador found awaiting him, when he arrived in December at Surat, swelling with a sense of his own importance and firmly impressed with the belief that he had only to make his appearance there, and all difficulties would be removed. "We shall march," he had written a few months before to James Vernon, one of the Secretaries of State, "like a small army. I believe I shall set out in a greater state and equipage than ever any European ambassador yet appeared in India. The machinations of the Old Company's servants will vanish like clouds before the sun, when I come to make my appearance[3]."

His first act was to call on the Captain of the Old Company's ship, which had brought Gayer to Bombay, to strike his flag; his next to bribe the Governor of Surat to allow him to make a public entry into the town with his retinue. To obtain this permission he presented the Governor with a gift of 1000 gold mohurs, giving at the same time 500 more to the Governor's son, and

[1] Bruce 3. 464. [2] Hunter 2. 355.
[3] Hunter 2. 352.

a further 200 to two of his principal officers[1]. He then formally notified to Gayer, that his Commission would be publicly read on the 28th December, and required that he and all the English under his authority should be present. In answer Gayer disavowed any dependence on him or Waite. Overtures were then made to the servants of both Companies by the native Governor, with a view to ascertaining which would pay the most for his support. He offered the Council of the Old Company to have the New Company excluded from the trade, if their President would promise three lacs of rupees to the Mogul, at the same time informing them that Waite had given him a written promise for four lacs, and that that promise had been forwarded to the Mogul, a statement which was probably false. The Council of the Old Company having declined to make this payment, Waite[2], on the 22nd of January 1701, applied to the Governor to have the London Company's servants put in irons, for an insult which he asserted had been offered to the Ambassador. When this demand was refused, Sir William Norris himself caused Mr Wyche and Mr Garnett, two of the Council of the London Company, and Mr Richardson, their Secretary, to be arrested, put them in confinement, and then delivered them with their hands tied to the Governor, who detained them till they found security for their appearance before him, when called. Against this outrage on English subjects, Sir John Gayer protested on the 25th of January 1701, declaring the Consul and Ambassador responsible for this injustice, and at the same time presenting a petition to the Governor for his protection, and that he might be allowed to take a copy of any accusations against him by the New Company, that a true state of the case might

[1] Bruce 3. 375. [2] Bruce 3. 377.

be presented to the Mogul. Two days afterwards Sir William Norris set out from Surat on his journey to the Mogul's Court.

Throughout these proceedings Sir John Gayer, an honest and well-meaning man, in his anxiety to avoid a civil war at Surat with his fellow countrymen, seems to have failed to realise that passive resistance and carefully worded protests were thrown away on such a ruffian as Waite unless backed up by force. Governor Pitt, whom Gayer had consulted on several occasions during these proceedings, seems from the first to have formed a far more correct estimate of Waite's character, and to have foreseen the necessity of making him to understand clearly, that if he had recourse to violence, violence would be employed against him. So far back as May 1700, Pitt had written to Waite a very characteristic letter in which he says, "I have been throughly inform'd of your behaviour towards our Masters Servants and what I must wonder att is that they did not doe themselves justice upon you with their own hands. For my part without direct orders from the King or from our Company I will have noe regard to your powers, nor your Persons, otherwise than as you shall deserve by your deportment. I perceive you would use your fellow subjects as some did in Oliver's days, for which afterwards they justly and Severely Suffer'd" (an allusion to Waite's father, Colonel T. Waite the regicide), "and there is great probability that yours may be the same fate. I wish you as much health and prosperity as you doe me[1]."

In the following month he had written to Gayer, "I could wish he came in the Errand to displace me without our Masters consent. And I would make him renounce those little honours he pretends

[1] Hedges 3. 51.

to, as well as make him senceable of the blackest of Crimes, his ingratitude to his old Masters."

In September he and his Council had written again to Gayer, "We wonder at S^r^ Nicholas's impudence in confineing one of the Counsell of Suratt and Capt Hudson, and doe more the Latter did not fall on board him with his ship and punish him for his insolence, and had the President So contriv'd to cutt off all those that struck the fflagg it would have deterr'd others from the like undertaking, and let him have care how he begins to turn piratt himself in takeing any of our ships, for if he touches a ship belonging to this Presidency, wee will Certainly fit out a brisk privateer to make reprisall, and shall be very ready to Joyn with you on the same accompt[1]."

On hearing of the last outrage committed by Norris in the following January, he wrote to Colt, the Old Company's President at Surat, "Have those three gentlemen no resentment, that was soe ignominiously punish'd and affronted by S^r^ Wm. Norris and afterwards deliver'd up to the Moors Government. 'Tis pitty there was never a Felton amongst them[2]."

Writing to Beard, the Old Company's President in Bengal in May 1701, with reference to the same incident and another which shortly followed it, he says, "Our Generall advises you what has happen'd at Surat as to the Moors Seizing S^r^ John Gayer and his Lady. President Colt writes me how Shamefully they were us'd during the time of their being in the Governours house, you'll see ther has been brisk doings amongst 'em ffor that S^r^ W^m^ Norris seiz'd two of the Counsell and the Secretary, ty'de 'em Neck and heels and deliver'd 'em up

[1] Hedges 3. 60. [2] Hedges 3. 61.

in Irons to the Governour, which I hope our Masters will revenge to the last degree in England, for our laws will not allow of it, besides those Gentlemen if they have any Courage will write itt in red letters upon his Person[1]."

There can be little doubt that these outrages on the part of Waite and Norris had the effect of seriously lowering the prestige of the English, not only at Surat, but in other parts of India. Writing some two years afterwards to the Court of his Company in London, Governor Pitt says, "The contests here has made 'em" (the Mahomedan Government) "put noe Small Value upon this trade, besides your having Suffer'd your servants to be treated after that most ignominious manner at Surat for many years past, has encouraj'd 'em to attempt the like in all your Settlements, and I hear in Bengall that they chawbuck" (*i.e.* flog) "Englishmen in their publick Durbars, which formerly they never presum'd to doe, and the Junkaneers" (revenue collectors) "all over the Countrey are very insolent, only those within our reach I keep in pretty good order, by now and then giving 'em a pretty good banging[2]."

Sir William Norris moved off from Surat on his journey to the Mogul's camp on the 26th of January 1701, with a retinue of 60 Europeans and 300 natives[3]. Two days after his departure Sir John Gayer and his wife and the Old Company's servants were seized and imprisoned by the Governor of Surat; and intelligence of this fact was sent to the Ambassador by Waite, together with an intimation that their Vakeel had started for the Mogul's camp to negotiate for them, with a credit of two lacs of rupees. This news reached Norris on his march, who at once despatched

[1] Hedges 3. 67. [2] Hedges 3. 80. [3] Bruce 3. 404.

a messenger to Waite, asking to be informed by whose authority this further outrage had been committed, as this information would be required by him in his negotiations with the Mogul. He subsequently wrote again to Waite expressing his fears that if Gayer and the Old Company's servants were released from their confinement, they would in revenge for the injuries they had sustained blockade the port of Surat, an event which would excite the Mogul's anger, and might frustrate the objects of the Embassy. He therefore recommended that a ship should be constantly stationed off the port to prevent this measure being resorted to.

On the 3rd of March the Embassy reached Brampore, the modern Burhanpuri, 470 miles from Surat, at which place Asad Khan, the Grand Vizier of the Empire, was encamped[1]. It was obviously of the utmost importance to conciliate this high official, who had for so many years been the Mogul's chief officer, and whose influence with him was greater than that of any other person. Here the Ambassador displayed the greatest want of tact by demanding to be admitted to a conference with the Vizier, preceded by drums beating and trumpets blowing, a demand with which the Vizier declined to comply, as being inconsistent with Eastern usages on such occasions. Standing on his supposed dignity, Norris declined to give way, and abruptly left Brampore without a conference, "thus wantonly," in the opinion of Sir William Hunter, "incurring the enmity of the one person who might have made the Embassy a success[2]." A month after leaving Brampore, he reached the Mogul's camp at Parnella on the 7th of April, where he obtained the Mogul's permission

[1] Bruce 3. 406. [2] Hunter 2. 358.

to encamp with his retinue till such time as the ceremonial for his audience could be adjusted.

The date fixed for the audience was the 28th of April. Before that day, Norris had received information that the Royal Assent had been given to an Act of Parliament, which had continued the existence of the Old Company as a corporate body, so long as the contribution made by their Secretary, Mr Dubois, of £315,000 to the £2,000,000 lent to the Government as the consideration for the monopoly of the Eastern trade remained unredeemed. This must have been a heavy blow to him. Some months before, on hearing that a Bill for this purpose had been introduced, he had expressed a hope and belief that it could never pass[1]. "It absolutely contradicts," he had written, "what I have in charge and am instructed to acquaint the Great Mogul with, that the Old Company are to determine the 29th of September 1701." Now that he had received definite information that the Act had passed, it was impossible for him to continue his negotiations on the assumption that the New Company would be substituted for the Old in the course of the next few months. After consultation with the principal members of the Embassy, it was agreed that he must retract the assertions to this effect which he had made not only to the local Governors of the several provinces through which he had passed, but also to the Mogul's Ministers[2]. This might prejudice the negotiations, and excite the suspicions of the Mogul that an attempt had been made by the Ambassador to deceive him. But there was no help for it.

His difficulties were further augmented by the complicated and conflicting directions that he had received from his colleagues, the three King's Consuls,

[1] Hunter 2. 361. [2] Bruce 3. 461.

as to the purport of the separate firmans, which they desired him to obtain for their several Presidencies, notwithstanding the recommendation he had himself received from the Court of the New Company to obtain one general firman for the three; and by the discovery, which he now made, that the charges of his Embassy would exceed the calculations of the Court and his own estimate, and that each of the three Consuls was endeavouring to shift the burden of his expenses on the others, whilst all three had become very discontented and did not hesitate to express their conviction that the success of his negotiations was highly improbable. In the meanwhile the Old Company's Armenian Vakeels from each Presidency had made their appearance in the camp and were doubtless throwing every possible obstacle in his way by discrediting him and his Company and distributing presents to the Ministers of the Mogul[1].

When the day fixed for his audience with the Mogul arrived, the Ambassador's spirits must have been revived by the magnificence of the procession, in which he was permitted to approach the Royal Presence. In his letter to Waite describing the function, he not only reports that the etiquette of the punctilious Court had been so far relaxed, that he and his followers had been permitted to salute Aurungzeb "after the same manner as we would do our own King," but records with fond complacency every detail of that imposing pageant[2]. It was headed by an officer on horseback whom he calls the Commander of his Artillery, followed by 12 carts carrying the 12 brass cannon, which the Directors of his Company, as appears from their letter to him of the 4th of April 1699, had hoped "would sound loudly in the Emperor's

[1] Bruce 3. 456. [2] Hunter 2. 354.

ears and prevail him to grant whatever you shall have occasion to ask[1]." After these came five hackeries piled high with English broadcloth and other presents. Then 100 "cohurs and messures" carrying glassware and looking-glasses for presents, followed by four fine Arabian horses, two of them richly caparisoned. Then came four English soldiers on horseback, guarding the presents. After these a grand display of ambassadorial pomp: the Union Jack, Red, White and Blue flags, the King's and the Ambassador's crests and Coats of Arms "very large and gilt, the King's arms requiring sixteen men to carry them," musicians with rich liveries on horseback, a kettle-drum, trumpeters, officers and troopers armed and accoutred after the English mode; two state palanquins, one "with English furniture of silver tissue brocaded," and the other in which the Ambassador was himself borne, "with Indian embroidered furniture." In front of it rode his Excellency's Master of the Horse, carrying the Sword of State pointed up, and on either side two pages richly dressed. His Secretary followed in another rich palanquin, carrying the King's letter to the Mogul, with an officer on each side of him on horseback. A coach, in which were two more Secretaries and the Treasurer of the Embassy, wearing a golden key, brought up the rear.

The reception of the Ambassador was very flattering. His presents were graciously accepted and his request for three separate firmans for the three provinces granted. Orders were at once issued to the Mogul's Ministers for their preparation. In return for these favours Norris proceeded to pay Aurungzeb a second ceremonial visit of state, at which he ventured to proffer a further present

[1] Bruce 3. 462.

of 200 gold mohurs, which his Imperial Majesty obligingly deigned to receive. It was a proud time for Sir William Prodigality, the name by which Norris was best known for years afterwards by his fellow countrymen in the East. His anticipations seemed at last realised. He had approached the greatest monarch of the East with all imaginable grandeur, and as he had predicted, all difficulties seemed for the moment to have vanished at his appearance, as clouds before the sun.

There is no need to assume that the Mogul in promising him his three firmans had any intention to deceive him, or was not quite prepared to grant them for the consideration, which Waite had already agreed to give, namely an undertaking that the English Company would effectually suppress the pirates, and guarantee to make good any losses that might be sustained by the natives of India, whose ships had been or might hereafter be plundered. He would naturally assume that the Ambassador was cognisant of this offer and interpret his silence with respect to it as consent. In due course the documents for carrying it into effect were prepared simultaneously with the three firmans, and presented for the Ambassador's signature. Nor was it till then that Norris seems to have been aware of the terribly false position in which he had been placed by Waite's officious interference. It was in his opinion impossible to assent to the proposal, when it was submitted to him. To have done so would have been equivalent to throwing the burden at present borne by the Dutch, French and English nationalities wholly and solely on the New Company. But the difficulty of persuading the Mogul and his Ministers of this impossibility was insuperable. "If your English King," they might well argue, "whom

you say you represent, is as powerful as you would have us believe, why cannot he restrain his subjects, who are the chief offenders, from seizing our subjects' ships? Your own officer, Sir Nicholas Waite, sees no such difficulty as you suggest." If the Ambassador were to reply, and it was the only reply he could make, "My officer had no authority to make this agreement," the Mogul's Ministers would not unnaturally ask, "Why did you not tell us this before?" They might also say, "If he is an impostor, what security have we got that you are not one also? The Armenian Vakeels from the three Presidencies all tell us that they are here on behalf of the real Company, which has been trading with us for generations and with which we have entered into numberless treaties. That Company has persistently denounced all other English traders in our country as pirates. You told us, when you came here, that that Company's powers would expire this year. Now you admit that this statement of yours is untrue, and that your King has prolonged their existence. Which of you is the real Company, authorised by your King to trade with us? Each of you says his is, and that the others are pirates or in league with the pirates. We have long suspected you both of piracy. And now as soon as you are asked to sign an agreement to put the pirates down, you decline to do so. Before proceeding further, we must find out which of you is the real Company; and when that has been done, the real Company must give us substantial guarantees that it will put down the pirates once for all. It is plain that you have both of you grown rich by your dealings with the Mogul's subjects. We must now take effective measures to ensure that neither of you shall rob them any more."

That some such considerations as these had

suggested themselves to the Mogul and his advisers is probable from the next step they took, which was to order two letters to be written, one to "Seid Sedula, a Holy Priest at Surat," to ascertain which of the two Companies was really authorised by the English King to trade with India, and the other to the Governor of Surat, to report on the powers and resources of the two Companies[1]. This of course led to considerable delay. Its immediate effect was to create a brisk competition between the Agents of the two Companies at Surat with the object of obtaining favourable reports from the Priest and the Governor, the former of whom agreed to report in Waite's favour, if he was paid 10,000 rupees, and the latter to obtain the three firmans from the Mogul, if he were paid 125,000 rupees for the first, 62,500 for the second, and 100,000 for the third on the distinct understanding that they were not to be signed until the seas were cleared of the pirates.

In the meanwhile the Ambassador with his retinue continued to stay on at Parnella, trying in vain to evade the requirements of the Mogul by offering a lac of rupees, if the condition for the suppression of the pirates were withdrawn, an offer which was calculated to confirm rather than to remove the suspicion that he was acting in collusion with them. At last, on the 28th of October, the Mogul told him plainly that "the English best knew, if it was their interest to trade, and that if he refused to give the obligation, he knew the same way back to England as he came." Interpreting this ultimatum as a dismissal from the Court, Norris asked for "dusticks" or passes for Surat, and published a notice that all persons having any claims on the Embassy should give

[1] Bruce 3. 466, 467.

them in within five days, as at that time he proposed to commence his journey home.

The reply of the Mogul's Ministers to this notification, which they seem to have regarded as a mere attempt to bluff them, was to send him once more the obligation required by the Mogul for his signature. He refused to sign it; and having obtained what purported to be passes for his return on the 8th of November he struck his tents and started on his march for the coast, without asking for a final interview with the Mogul, a step which seems to have been taken as an insult by that great potentate. By this time the Ambassador's funds must have been running very low by reason of the expenses of so long a sojourn in the Mogul's camp. Had it not been for this fact, he might have remained there indefinitely. "'Tis said," Governor Pitt had written home to the Old Company on the 27th of October, "Sir William is expected at Metchlepatam to embarque for England in Jany next, but I am of opinion they will hardly part with him soe soon, unless they see hee has no more money to spend amongst 'em. And 'tis much admir'd by all the great men of this country, that the English should bee at the charge of sending an Ambassadour to procure grants of priviledges of a dying King[1]." A week or two before he had written to his friend Raworth, "Your Ambassadour is at the Camp eating rice and Curry at the King's charge, and notwithstanding the vast expense he has been at wee doe not hear he has effected anything, nor will they, I believe, part with him till they have suck't him dry[2]."

After three days' march Norris was overtaken by Mahwood Khan, the Duan of the Deccan, who told him he had orders to bring him back, as he

[1] Hedges 3. 70. [2] Hedges 3. 68.

had set out without the Mogul's permission. On the production of his passes he was informed that they had been given by an inferior officer without the Mogul's leave, and that he must halt for two days until the Mogul's pleasure could be ascertained. At the expiration of that period, having received no counter orders, he resumed his march and reached Brampore on the 14th of November, where he found the Mogul's chief general Gazedee Khan encamped[1]. Here he was detained until the 5th of February in the following year, waiting to hear what the Mogul's pleasure was. In the end he received from the Mogul a letter and a sword for the King of England; and on payment of 2300 gold mohurs to Gazedee Khan he was permitted to proceed on his way to the coast. He reached Surat on the 12th of April; and on the 29th of that month, after paying a further sum of 3000 rupees to the Governor and another 2000 to his principal officers, was allowed to embark with his suite for England. Before his ship reached St Helena he died of dysentery. The expenses of his embassy had amounted to 676,800 rupees (about £80,000), a prodigious sum in those days, a fatal drain on the slender resources of the New Company, which from its start had been cruelly crippled by lack of ready money for working capital[2]. This huge expenditure, so far from bringing any advantage whatever to the Company, inflicted very serious injury not only on them but on all other European traders in India. Eleven days after the Ambassador's abrupt departure from his camp, the Mogul caused the following order to be issued by his Vizier Asad Khan to all the Governors and Viceroys of his provinces:

[1] Bruce 3. 470–472.
[2] Bruce 3. 468.

"The English and other Europeans having entered into a contract to defend our subjects from Piracies committed on the seas: notwithstanding which they have seized and plundered Moors' ships: therefore I have wrote all Subahs and Dewans, that all manner of trade be interdicted with those nations throughout our Dominions, and that you seize on all their effects whatsoever, wherever they can be found, and take them carefully in your possession, sending an inventory of them to me; and it is likewise ordered that you confine their persons, but not to close imprisonment. I write this by the King's command, which you are to obey, and know that this is a firm decree for so doing, an answer to which with the news that relates herewith we demand with all expedition[1]."

Such was the disastrous result of the ill-conceived project of sending a Royal Embassy to the Mogul for the purpose of inducing him to grant exclusive rights to the New Company. Needless to say, the Ambassador himself and his two Consuls, John Pitt and Sir Nicholas Waite, all of whom had committed mistakes grave enough to have prejudiced any prospects of its success, indulged in mutual recriminations, each expatiating on the incompetence and folly of the others. In Bombay the effect of the Mogul's edict was to make the position of both Companies, bad as it was before, worse if possible than ever. In Bengal, the blow fell most heavily on the factors of the New Company in their defenceless up-country stations at Patna, Kasimbazar and elsewhere, who were promptly arrested with all their effects, valued at 62,000 rupees, by the Mogul's officers in the following February[2]. Littleton himself at Hugli attempted to fortify his chief

[1] Hunter 2. 361; Wilson 1. 169; Wheeler 1. 386.
[2] Wilson 1. 161.

factory, and was assisted in the task by some of the servants of the Old Company, who happened to be there and stood by him "for fear of the worst," to quote their own words[1]. The great majority of the Old Company's officers in Bengal succeeded in making good their retreat with the Company's belongings to Chuttannuttee, where Beard had lately strengthened the defences of Fort William, having been for some time past convinced that it was better to spend his Company's money in powder and shot and the strengthening of his ramparts than to waste it in presents to the local rulers.

The question that naturally arises in any account of Governor Pitt's career is whether he was prepared for this sudden and critical emergency, and what steps he had been taking to meet it. As late as the 17th of October, he had written confidently to his old friend Sir Henry Johnson, "Sir William Norris is still at the Kings camp, endeavouring to doe you all the mischiefe he can, but I believe he will be able to effect little or nothing[2]." Within a month, on the 16th of November, the Mogul's edict had gone forth, and peremptory orders had been sent to Daud Khan, the Nawab of the Carnatic, one of his chief generals, to stop all English trade in his province; to arrest all Englishmen and their effects, wherever they might be found; to place them in confinement and send to the Mogul an inventory of whatever property of theirs he could lay his hands on. In pursuance of these orders, on the 29th of January 1702 Daud Khan with considerable forces of horse and foot made his appearance at St Thomé, almost within gunshot of Fort St George[3].

[1] Bruce 3. 481.
[2] Hedges 3. 65.
[3] Wheeler 1. 382.

## CHAPTER XII

### DAUD KHAN

THE arrival of Daud Khan at this juncture with his army to wreak the Mogul's vengeance on the English settlement of Fort St George was not the first occasion on which Governor Pitt had had an opportunity of making his acquaintance. Some months before John Pitt had come out as King's Consul to India, Daud, then a general in Zulficar Khan's army, had paid a visit to St Thomé, ostensibly "for the purpose of seeing the sea and washing in it," and had asked for accommodation at Fort St George[1]. The Governor, who had good grounds for suspecting that his designs were not altogether friendly, seeing that his brother Zelim Khan had plundered certain villages adjoining Fort St David and that Daud himself was a commander "usually employed on difficult attempts," had replied that "he would be welcome provided that he did not bring too many men with him." On this occasion Daud had presented the Governor with a horse valued at 100 pagodas, and received in return complimentary presents valued at 300 pagodas. He had remained in the neighbourhood for ten days, in the course of which he was entertained with music in the Chapel at St Thomé. The day after he had left, his younger brother Bahaudar Khan, commander of 1500 horse in Zulficar's army,

[1] Wheeler I. 344.

came and stayed at Fort St George for three days, and received presents valued at 100 pagodas.

The Governor had not unnaturally suspected that the visits of these two distinguished officers of the Mogul were not altogether due to the attractions of Fort St George as a seaside resort and an appreciation of the musical church services at St Thomé; and he had thought it prudent "that the garrison and out town be put in the best posture of defence." He had therefore proceeded "to make a levy on the inhabitants of Black Town for building a wall, and constructing other works for the defence of the town." These works had been carried out at a cost of 1050 pagodas.

In the July of the following year (1700), whilst Sir William Norris was still at Masulipatam, Daud, who seems to have had a pleasing recollection of the excellence of the Governor's cellar, wrote to Governor Pitt with a request to buy him some liquors. The Governor "supposing his interest might be of advantage to the Company in those parts[1]," ordered six dozen of French brandy, six cases of spirits and two chests of Syrash to be sent to him. These seem to have been so much to Daud's taste that during the next six months he wrote several letters of compliment to the Governor, asking "for various sorts of liquors, which accordingly were sent to him[2]."

On the 15th of January 1701, about the time when Sir William Norris was starting from Surat for the Mogul's camp at Parnella, the news arrived at Fort St George that Daud, who had by that time been appointed by the Mogul Nawab of the Carnatic and Gingi countries, had come to Arcot, about four days' march from the Fort. Two days later the following entry appears in the Consultation

[1] Wheeler I. 353.

[2] Wheeler I. 360.

Book of the Fort: "It being the custom of all Europeans to present all Nabobs and Governors when they come first to their Government, in order to procure a confirmation of their privileges, besides at present we are carrying on a great investment here and at Fort St David, and have a great deal of money spread up and down the country: further a few days ago we have advice from Surat by Armenian letters that our affairs are embroiled there: all of which induces us to consider of a considerable present for the Nabob and Dewan and their officers, and fitting persons to send with it: though before we heard the news from Surat, we intended to have sent two Englishmen, but altered our resolution, not knowing but that the troubles there may affect us here. So there being one Senor Nicholas Manuch, a Venetian and an inhabitant of ours for many years, who has the reputation of an honest man, besides he has lived at the King's Court upwards of thirty years, and was a servant to one of the Princes, and speaks the Persian language excellently well: for which reasons we think him the properest person to send at this time with our Chief Dubash Ramapah, and have unanimously agreed with the advice of all capable of giving it, to send the presents: so in order to their setting out tomorrow on their journey, we have delivered them our instructions and letters as entered after this consultation."

The presents for Daud Khan on this occasion were valued at 1700 pagodas, and those for his Duan Mahomed Seid at 190 pagodas, sums which, as Governor Pitt must have been well aware, fell very far short of those which Daud's predecessor Zulficar Khan had received from Governor Yale on a similar occasion. The two envoys were instructed now to ask from Daud first a confirmation

of the privileges conferred by his predecessor: secondly, the redress of certain grievances, of which the merchants trading with the Fort had lately complained, the most important of which were the imposition of additional customs duties, and the stoppage of their goods by the native officials on their way to the coast from the interior: and thirdly, the abandonment by Daud's officers of all claims on behalf of the Mogul in respect of the wrecks of English ships on that coast. From a memorandum given by Governor Pitt to the envoys, it is clear that he was aware of the mischief which his cousin John Pitt had been doing, by the dissemination among the native merchants of the suggestions that as Fort St George was only a trading station, the Governor had no right to fortify it, and that it was unreasonable that the Mogul's officers should allow him to collect revenues from the natives[1]. The memorandum in question is thus worded:

"From the various reports that have been and are still going, we have reason to believe several things will be objected against us, knowing that this place is not only envied by the Country Governors, but by all Europeans too. We therefore as a memorandum give you the following advice.

If anything be said about our revenues, which are generally magnified four times as much as they are, it is to be answered, that it is paid by none but our own inhabitants who are enriched by our trade solely, and are daily getting money from us; which had long ago ruined us, had not we set up revenues to regain some money from them towards defraying our main charges.

If anything be said in relation to our making fortifications, it may be answered, that we are always, when new Governors come, pulling down one thing and building another and repairing[2]."

It is very unlikely that Pitt thought it probable that Daud Khan would regard the presents sent him as adequate, and at once concede what was

[1] Bruce 3. 442. [2] Wheeler 1. 363.

asked of him. He was thoroughly acquainted with the methods of Eastern diplomacy; and he must have fully recognised the difficulties of the situation in which he had been placed by the malicious insinuations of his cousin the King's Consul. He would also not unreasonably expect that the King's Ambassador when he arrived at the Court of the Mogul would indulge in similar misrepresentations. A weaker man might have thought it prudent in such a crisis to offer Daud Khan more liberal terms. But the Governor no doubt felt that too generous an offer would inevitably be regarded as an indication of weakness and that the more he offered Daud, the more he would be asked to give. He therefore sent the Nawab what he considered an adequate though by no means an unduly liberal present, whilst at the same time he was careful to omit no act of Eastern courtesy to which Daud was entitled.

He gave his envoys two letters, one to be delivered to Daud with his public presents, and the other to be handed to him privately afterwards with a further present of 3000 rupees. The first of these letters was thus worded:

"To Dawood Khan, Nabob. I have with great impatience waited for your arrival at Arcot which being informed of two days ago I celebrated with great joy, preparing my people to wait on you with such acknowledgements of respect as I was capable of providing. A list of which comes enclosed, whereof I humbly request your Excellency's acceptance, and what I add to it is, my hearty wishes for your good health and prosperity, and a long continuance in your Government.

Thomas Pitt."

The second letter was as follows:

"To Dawood Khan, Nabob. I congratulate your Excellency's arrival at Arcot and have sent Mr Manuch, and our Eggb Ramapah to confirm the same, and to give me an account of your good health, and to request your Excellency's favour to us in confirming our ancient privileges at Chinnapatam and

Tevenapatam." (Forts St George and St David.) "I wish your Excellency all health and prosperity, and a long continuance in your Government, under which I doubt not but all will be happy.

Thomas Pitt."

The next entry in the Consultation Book relating to this mission is dated Thursday, the 30th of January. "Senor Manuch and Ramapah," it says, "advising us that the Nabob, hearing of a Persian mare that was to be sold in our town, ordered them to write us about it, he being desirous to buy it; but we well knowing their manner of buying and what is meant by it, and not being willing to disgust him about so small a matter, we bought the mare for two hundred pagodas, and it is ordered that the Steward forthwith provide furniture in order to her being sent our Agents at the Camp tomorrow."

Four days later, the following entry was made in the Consultation Book:

"Monday 3rd February. Last night Senor Manuch and Ramapah, returning from the Camp, this day they appeared before us in Council to give an account of their proceedings, which is as follows. That when they came to the Camp, they waited on the Nabob, he having sent ten horse and fifty foot to conduct them, who received them kindly, and ordered them to send for their present, which he accepted of: but the next day he returned it, except some trifles, he giving broad hints that it was not a sufficient present for him, and that his predecessor had ten times as much: he also inveighing against us in scurrilous language, reaping up the business of Fort St David's, how we had killed Selim Khan's brother, and threatening revenge upon it. But two days after, our agents having by their application to some of the principal officers in some measure pacified the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie, he sent again for his present, but still told them it was not near enough for him, he having been at Court, where it had cost him a great deal of money for his employ, which he must and would raise by some means or other: telling us that he had an account of our revenues, culculating them at about one hundred thousand pagodas per annum: that we had nothing to do with Blacktown, in which he would put a Governor, and constrain us to keep only to our Fort.

He also daily encouraged unjust complaints against us, telling us that he would first go to Tanjore, Tevenapatam" (Fort St David) "and then come to St Thomé, when he would ruin this fort. After all which he dismissed our agents without any Perwanna or Tasheriff[1] to the Governor as usual, and writ us only a letter referring to that they should tell us, and the Dewan the same, the Dewan also signing an insignificant Perwanna."

The letter in question was as follows:

"From Dawood Khan to the Governor of Chinnapatam. I wish the Governor all health. I received the friendly letter you sent me by Doctor Manuch and your Vakeel, and observe the contents thereof, and have likewise heard their request, and have given them my answer thereto, which they will acquaint you with. Pray write me often of your health."

The entry in the Consultation Book proceeds:

"Our people meeting with the mare we sent the Nabob on the way brought her back with them. They also inform us that they were told by several at the Camp, that this dislike of the Nabob to us is occasioned through information by some people of our own town, who not only make their court by it, but also participate a part of what can be extorted from us, who when discovered, we resolve shall pay not only for the present mischief, but what has passed in former times.

So having well debated and considered of what we have now been informed as to the demands and expectations of the Nabob, it is unanimously resolved that no further present be made to him, unless it be so trivial a sum as not worth our disputing: otherwise we shall entail an excessive charge upon the Company for ever, for if a new Nabob should be sent every month, they would expect the same. It is further agreed that our Garrison be put and kept in the best posture of defence it is capable of, resolving to stand the event, and advise Fort St David to do the same."

It was also resolved to write in the meantime to Asad Khan, the Mogul's Grand Vizier, and also to Zulficar Khan, Daud's predecessor, "representing the ill-treatment of our Agents sent to Dawood Khan and his unreasonable demand upon this place."

[1] A complimentary present.

Five months passed after this resolution before Daud Khan fulfilled his threat of marching on Fort St George. In the interval the Governor had strengthened his scanty native force by replacing some of the peons with rajpoots, "they being," to quote from the Consultation Book, "people most to be relied upon in time of trouble." Accompanied by two members of his Council, he had also himself carried a relief force of 30 men from his scanty garrison with necessaries and stores on board the *Advice* frigate to Fort St David, where the Deputy Governor, Mr William Fraser, who was in command there, was threatened with an attack by Daud. Daud in the meanwhile seems to have gone the round of his province, collecting what he could extort from one source and another to recoup the moneys he had paid at Court for his appointment. His progress completed, he came back to St Thomé in pursuance of his promise to get what he could out of the English at Fort St George. At the worst the Governor might be relied upon to offer him again the present which he had declined to accept in January and to furnish him with a further supply of the European liquors he so much loved. At the best he might be induced to pay a handsome consideration for the confirmation of the existing privileges of the Old Company in that part of India, and for permission to continue his taxation of the Mogul's subjects at Black Town. It is not likely that Daud as yet had been authorised to attack the Fort by the Mogul or the Grand Vizier to whom the Governor had written for protection. Negotiations were still pending at Parnella with the English Ambassador, and Aurungzeb had not yet made up his mind as to which of the two Companies he would support against the other. These facts should not be overlooked in perusing the following narrative

of the events of the next fortnight as detailed in the Consultation Books of the Fort.

"Wednesday 2nd July. This day Dawood Khan coming to St Thomé, we sent Narrain[1] to wait on the Dewan, to know what would be the properest time to attend the Nabob with our present; who in the evening returned and brought us word that the Dewan advised us tomorrow morning[2].

The Garrison being in good order, the Governor gave directions to be very strict in their duty, and keep both companies to their arms, to prevent surprise, and ordered the Gunner to shot all the Guns upon the works towards St Thomé.

Thursday 3rd. We having agreed the amount of the present to the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie, and Mr Ellis offering himself to go with it, it was agreed that he and Mr Davenport should go, with Captain Lambert: the latter out of curiosity being desirous to see the Nabob. And it is ordered that Narrain and the Moollah should go with them as Linguists. So about ten this morning they set out attended by a Serjeant and three files of Grenadiers.

The Linguists going directly to the Dewan to give an account of the presents for himself, the Nabob and the Buxie, he complained that the ready money for the Nabob was too little: so desired that the Persian mare might be returned, and two half pieces of yellow cloth, and that the Nabob might have one thousand rupees instead of it. Of which Mr Ellis acquainted the Governor by note, who with the advice of the Council sent them one thousand rupees.

About eight this night Mr Ellis and the others returned from St Thomé, acquainting us of the odd reception they had from the Nabob, and that he had returned all his presents except two parrots: and that the Dewan accepted of the cloth and other things, but the money intended for him was brought back—they not having an opportunity to give it him after their visiting the Nabob. All the Buxie's present was likewise brought back, and one of the Grenadiers died so soon as returned hither.

The Council to be summoned to meet at seven o'clock tomorrow morning with the Commanders of the Europe ships to consult what is most proper to be done to reinforce the Garrison and prevent the Nabob from doing us any mischief.

Friday 4th. We being informed by people that we keep at

[1] Described in other parts of the Consultation Book as the Governor's Brahmin spy.

[2] Wheeler I. 369–380.

St Thomé, that after Mr Ellis and the others came away last night, the Nabob at his Durbar, in discourse about this place, was saying that ten thousand pagodas should not excuse us: reflecting upon the amount of our revenues, and particularly upon the Tobacco and Betel, and our building the Blacktown wall and divers other things. From which we infer that we must expect no favour from him: for yesterday of his own accord he told our Linguists that he had sent four Chobdars and twenty-five men as a safeguard to prevent any of his army from pillaging our villages (Egmore, Persewankum and Triplicane). Notwithstanding which they fell in upon one this morning and carried off a great quantity of straw and firewood. Whereupon the Governor wrote the Nabob and Dewan the following letters:

'To Nabob, Dawood Khan, at St Thomé.

Your Excellency on coming to St Thomé was so just and generous as to appoint your own people to guard our towns, to prevent their being plundered, which occasioned my not sending any of my own people: but I am just now informed that your men have fallen in on the towns and plundered them, which is contrary to the trust reposed in your Excellency's word and justice.

Thomas Pitt.'

'To the Dewan, Mahomed Seid, at St Thomé.

It is a great satisfaction to me that we have a person of your honour and worth to be our friend; for which acknowledgements shall never be wanting.

The Nabob out of his own generosity appointed guards for our towns which prevented our sending some of our own; but this morning, contrary to his word of honour, his people are plundering them. I am unwilling to occasion troubles in the King's country, therefore I write to your honour, his Majesty's Dewan. What can I write more?

Thomas Pitt.'

We considering that if there be not a stop put to these unreasonable demands of Nabobs, that the ill consequences will in a little time be no less than a vast annual charge to this place: and we all unanimously concluding this to be a proper time to withstand them, being informed that his army consists of no more than three thousand horse and seven thousand foot, we think ourselves in a condition with the force we have and can raise, to baffle him if he offers to make any attempt upon us. So by order of the Governor and Council, and advice of the Commanders of the Europe ships and Commission Officers of the Garrison, it is resolved that the following measures be taken:

1st. That the Europe ships tomorrow morning land men according to charter party, viz. fifty out of the *Bedford*, thirty from the *Duchess*, thirty from the *Phœnix*, which will make a good Marine Company.

2nd. That the Trained Bands of this place be tomorrow raised, and that Captain Heron be appointed Captain, Mr. Berlu be Lieutenant and Mr. Wigmore be Ensign.

3rd. That about one hundred and twenty of the Portuguese inhabitants are to be immediately raised and armed and formed into a Company, and be commanded by Captain Emmanuel de Silva.

4th. That the Paymaster entertains one hundred Peons to be out as Scouts for intelligence, and reinforce our best watching places.

5th. That all the Company's cloth be brought in from the washers, washed and unwashed, to prevent its being plundered: and that the likeliest men of the watches be armed and posted in our out villages.

So all the preparations we are capable of being made for the defence of the place, we resolve that if the Nabob will not accept of the present we first proffered him that he shall have nothing.

Monday 7th. The Governor and Council, with the advice of the Commanders of the Europe ships and Commission Officers of the Garrison, quartered the men and appointed their particular posts, it being very hotly reported that the Nabob is making great preparations to come against us.

Our Moollah at St. Thomé advises that in conference with the Dewan this day, the Dewan told him that he feared some ill event if we sent not ten thousand pagodas: and that sum would effectually procure all we requested. Whereupon answer was returned the Moollah, to be imparted to the Dewan, that we expected no new grants only a confirmation of our perwannas in possession, and that we could not add anything to what first sent.

Tuesday 8th. The Governor receiving this day a letter from the Dewan, acquaints the Council therewith, translate whereof is entered after this consultation; the purport being to advise us that he had appeased the anger of the Nabob, who would now accept our present, which we intend shall be sent to him tomorrow morning.

'From Dewan Mahomed Seid.

My constant prayers to Heaven is for peace and quietness to the whole world, and it is my endeavour to forward the same, when it lies in my power. Accordingly I did the utmost to

appease the Nabob, which is now effected, and he satisfied. You may now send one of your trusty Englishmen with Narrain and Moollah and the present which was returned, which I will see presented and procure their dispatch: as it is my temper to make up all differences so your Honour may rest assured of me for your mediator. What else material Coja Ahmed will inform you.'

Wednesday 9th. The Governor and Council being met, dispatched away the presents that were returned, with Narrain and our Moollah; adding to the Nabob's present a Looking Glass, a China Lanthorn, two China Chests and a Dog to a Dog" (? a china ornament with two dogs) " the Governor answering the Dewan's letter as follows.

'To Dewan Mahomed Seid at St. Thomé.

I heartily join with your Honour in wishing peace and quietness to the whole world, and shall always do what lies in my power to effect the same, when it is to be had on honourable and just terms. I have sent Narrain and Coja Ahmed with the present that was returned desiring that it may be delivered as was first designed. I shall always acknowledge your Honour's favour, and proclaim you to the world to be a man of honour and justice. July 9th 1701.

Thomas Pitt.'

Thursday 10th. Narrain and the Moollah returned about one o'clock this morning from St. Thomé, and gave us the following account.

That the Nabob received his present very kindly with great expressions of friendship and sent a Horse and Tasheriff to the Governor. That the Dewan had received his present, but told them that he had added 1,500 Rupees of his own to the Nabob's to make it more acceptable (the meaning of which we well understand) and told them that if Coja Ahmed and our Moollah should come tomorrow, he would give him Perwannas for confirmation of our privileges.

This sudden alteration happening makes us fear a snake in the grass and resolve that we will not disband any of our forces till his army marches.

Friday 11th. This day the Nabob sent us word that to-morrow himself, the Dewan and Buxie would dine with us, and desired to know with what attendance we would admit him. We would fain have evaded it, but the messenger he sent pressing us so hard for a direct answer, we sent him word that the honour was too great to desire it, and greater than we expected, and if he was pleased to come, he should be very welcome and we

be ready to receive him in the Garrison with one hundred horse. So all imaginable preparation is ordered to be made, and Messrs. Marshall and Meverell (two of the Council) attended with ten Files of Grenadiers ordered to meet him at Mr. Ellis's Garden to conduct him into town.

Saturday 12th. About twelve this noon the Nabob, the King's Dewan and Buxie were conducted into town by Messrs. Marshall and Meverell: the streets being lined with soldiers from St. Thomé Gate up to the Fort, and the works that way manned with the Marine Company handsomely clothed with red coats and caps, all which made a very handsome appearance. The Governor attended with the Council, the Mayor, the Commanders of the Europe ships and some of the Principal Freemen, received him (the Nabob) a little way out of the Gate of the Fort; and after embracing each other, the Governor presented him with a small ball of Ambergrease cased with gold and a gold chain to it, and then conducted him into the Fort and carried him up to his lodgings: when after sitting some time the Nabob was pleased to pass very great compliments upon us, commending the place, as to what he had hitherto seen of it, and gave us all assurance of his friendship: after which the Governor set by him two cases of rich cordial waters, and called for wine, bidding him welcome by firing 21 pieces of Ordnance. Soon after the Governor drank to him the Mogul's health with 31 pieces of Ordnance: and the principal Ministers of State (our friends), as also the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie with 21 pieces of Ordnance each: all which healths the Nabob pledged in the cordial waters. So soon after the Dinner being ready, which was dressed and managed by a Persian inhabitant, the Governor conducted the Nabob into the Consultation room, which was very handsomely set out in all respects, the dinner consisting of about six hundred dishes, small and great, of which the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie and all that came with him, eat very heartily, and very much commended their entertainment. After dinner they were diverted with the dancing wenches. The Nabob was presented with cordial waters, French brandy and embroidered China quilts, all which he desired. The Dewan upon his promising us a Perwanna had a Ruby ring. The Buxie had one likewise offered to him, but refused it, and seemed all day out of humour occasioned, as we are informed, by some words that had passed this day between the Nabob, Dewan and him before they came hither.

About six in the evening they returned to St. Thomé, the Governor and Council and gentlemen in town, with the Commanders of the Europe ships waiting on them without the Gate of the Fort; where they mounted their horses and were attended

by Messrs. Marshall and Meverell to the place they received them, and at their going out of St. Thomas's Gate were saluted with 31 pieces of Ordnance.

Messrs. Marshall and Meverell returning, acquainted the Governor that the Nabob desired tomorrow morning to go aboard one of the Europe ships, and in order thereto that six Mussoolas might be sent to Triplicane: which was accordingly done, and the English ships boats ordered to attend him.

Sunday 13th. About seven o'clock this morning Messrs. Marshall and Meverell went to Triplicane, in order to wait on the Nabob aboard the English ships, and the commanders went off to receive him but the Nabob having been very drunk over night was not in a condition to go and deferred it till tomorrow morning.

The Breakfast we intended aboard ship for the Nabob, was sent to St. Thomé, which he accepted very kindly.

This day the Buxie sent to the Governor to desire leave to come into town to dine with a Persian of his acquaintance, and afterwards that he might see the Company's Garden, which was accordingly granted: where we sent Narrain to wait on him and see whether he was in a better humour than yesterday, and to present him with the Ring which he refused, with a gold Snuff box, both to the value of seventy five Pagodas: both which he accepted, declaring that he had no resentment against the English, but should be ready to serve them on all occasions, but he thought in the management of these affairs the Dewan had not done fairly by him.

The friendship of the Buxie is not so much desired for the Post he is now in, but that he is of very good family and has many relations near the King.

Monday 14th. We had several alarms from St. Thomé that the Nabob was going on board ship, but his mind altered, and then he desired to see the Company's Garden, which we used all means to divert him from by reason in going to it he must have had a view of all the weakest part of the town. This day he sent word to the Governor that he was informed from Abdul Labby, Governor of Chillambaram, that our Deputy Governor of Fort St. David protected the King's enemies: and desired that we would take care that the like be not done for the future. The Governor answered that he would immediately write to Fort St. David about it, which was accordingly done.

Tuesday 15th. This morning the Nabob sent word to the Governor that he would make him a visit at the Company's Garden: whereupon Narrain was sent to endeavour to divert him from it, which if he could not do, then to advise the time of his coming. So Narrain about twelve at noon sent to the

Governor to acquaint that the Nabob was coming with a great detachment of horse and foot with all his elephants, and what he meant by it he could not imagine. So the Governor ordered immediately to beat up for the Train bands and the Marine Company, and drew out a detachment of one hundred men under Captain Seaton to attend him and those gentlemen of the Council who went to the Garden to receive the Nabob. But Narrain seeing the Nabob coming in such a manner, told him it would create a jealousy in the Governor, and desired him to halt until he sent the Governor word and received his answer. But before the answer came, the Nabob was got into a Portuguese Chapel very drunk and fell asleep, and as soon as he waked, which was about four o'clock in the afternoon, he ordered his Camp to march towards the little Mount, where he pitched his tents, and sent to the Governor to excuse his not coming to the Garden, and desired him to send a dozen bottles of cordial waters which were sent to him.

Wednesday 16th. This morning our spies writing us that the Nabob with his army continued encamped at the little Mount, made us unwilling to disband any of our forces.

Thursday 17th. This day the spies from the Camp advise that the Nabob was marched with his army about a mile on the other side of Poonamallee."

So Daud and his army and his elephants went on their way; and the English at Fort St George saw them no more for another six months, at the end of which time they came back again with greatly increased numbers on a far more serious errand than the mere obtaining of an adequate complimentary present for the Nawab. For they came now by the express orders of their master Aurungzeb for the purpose of putting an end to all European trade in India, and with explicit directions to arrest and imprison every Englishman they could lay their hands upon, confiscate his property and send it forthwith to the Mogul.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE BLOCKADE OF FORT ST GEORGE

THAT Governor Pitt had some intimation of the coming danger is clear from the following extract from the Consultation Book of Fort St George, written some three weeks before the arrival of Daud and his army:

"Wednesday, 7th January 1702. We being jealous from the reports of the country as well as cautions given us from Surat, that the Mogul Government design us troubles, and being apprehensive the worst they can do is to stop trade and provisions by land, and commit devastations on our towns, which lie a small distance from us, and considering we are not able to protect them by detaching foot forces on all occasions, for that by the extremity of heat they are incapable of marching and doing service afterwards, experience of which hath already lost many lives. Wherefore we have resolved to give encouragement as formerly to all the Company's servants to keep horses, and to allow fifty fanams per mensem towards the charge thereof to commence from the 1st of February next. In consideration of which all such horses and their accoutrements shall be for the service of the Garrison and to be sent upon any expedition the Government shall think fit, but if such horses shall be killed or spoiled in the service of the garrison, they are to be paid for by the Honble Company and to be valued by the Governor and Council or such indifferent persons as they shall appoint to do the same[1]."

The responsibilities of the Governor at this crisis were very serious. He had under his charge not only the European community of Madras, consisting of some 200 men, women and children,

[1] Wheeler I. 381.

but also a native population of over 300,000, a considerable section of which was probably more or less disaffected, and very few of whom could be relied upon to give him any assistance against the enemy. His garrison consisted of two companies of regulars with a captain, lieutenant and ensign, who were supplemented in time of need by the Trainbands and Portuguese militia, and a very limited number of native troops. The defences of the settlement would not have been regarded even in that age as formidable by any European force. That the Governor was fully aware of some of their worst defects is evident from the anxiety which he had displayed some six months before, when Daud had proposed to visit the Company's garden, from whence he would "have had a view of all the weakest part of the town." The fort itself is described by Malleson[1], as having been forty-five years later "an oblong some 400 yards by 100, surrounded by a slender wall, defended by four bastions and four batteries, very slight and defective in their construction, and with no outworks to defend them." Black Town was surrounded by a still weaker wall, which would have presented no obstacle whatever to an European army. It had originally been constructed, in Yale's Presidency, of mud, coated with turf[2]. Many parts of it had been washed away by the rains, from time to time: and it had lately been decided to replace it by a substantial permanent brick-faced wall, which had been commenced in 1700, but was not completed until 1707. It can therefore have afforded but a very precarious defence at the time of this blockade. Moreover, the houses in Black Town came up almost to the walls of the fort, and would have enabled any enemy who got into the town to approach under the cover which they afforded to within a

[1] Malleson I. 140.

[2] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, 2. 7–10.

few yards of the fort without coming under fire from its guns. Forty-five years afterwards the place was taken by the French without the loss of a single man. But Governor Pitt was no doubt aware that the army which he had to face had no artillery; and it is clear from the entries in the Consultation Book that he had no expectation that the Nawab's troops would venture to expose themselves to the fire of his batteries, far less attempt to take the fort itself by storm. What he must have known he was in for was a siege of uncertain duration, which would involve the stoppage of the Company's trade and the supply of provisions from the land. Fortunately for him the monsoon season was just over, so that he might reasonably expect for the next few months supplies by sea, which would suffice for the more urgent needs of the garrison and the European community. The blockade was not unlikely to be a protracted one, in the course of which what he had most to fear was the guile of a treacherous foe, who would be informed of everything that happened in the city by such of the native population of Black Town, as were in league with the besiegers.

Before the month was out, intelligence of the approach of Daud and his army was brought to the Fort by his spies, as appears from the following entry in the Consultation Book[1]:

"Wednesday, 28th January. Early this morning set out our Moollah for the Nabob Dawood Khan's Camp (he having wrote the President to send him and Narrain) to remain there as our Vakeel: who had verbal instructions to answer the complaints, should any be made against us of what kind soever. It being advised by our spies that the Nabob with his army are near and upon their march to St Thomé, but their design not known. Also sent in our Moollah's Company, the Nabob's Gusbadar

[1] Wheeler I. 382–385.

whom he had sent to us some days past for liquors, and carried forty bottles of brandy distilled here with all manner of spices."

It may be inferred from the latter part of this entry that in view of approaching emergencies the Governor had no mind to deplete his cellar of his best French brandy and European liquors for the benefit of his opponent, though he was quite willing to bestow upon him a liberal supply of some villainously coarse spirit distilled at the Fort, the inferior quality of which was disguised by a plentiful admixture of spices. Knowing as he did Daud's tastes and propensities, it would have been difficult to have chosen a more appropriate present on the outbreak of hostilities.

The next three days' entries in the Consultation Book are as follows:

"Thursday 29th. Nabob Dawood Khan, Dewan and Buxie arriving this night at St Thomé with considerable forces of horse and foot; and the occasion of their coming being variously reported, and we being jealous that there are ill designs on foot against this place; to prevent their effecting which, we resolve to make ourselves as formidable as possible, for which end have taken the following resolutions, viz,

That the Trainbands of this city be immediately raised.

That tomorrow morning the Portuguese Militia be raised and posted at the outworks.

That both our Company soldiers lie at their arms night and day during the encampment next us.

That two hundred Rajpoots be taken into service, to guard our out towns and the Company's cloth at the washers.

That what Lascars, not exceeding 60 or 70, be entertained to assist the Governor.

That tomorrow morning our Brahmin Paupa be sent to our Moollah in the Nabob's Camp; and both of them go with a compliment from the President to the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie and carry with them a small present of Rosewater, Acheen oranges and sweetmeats.

About eleven o'clock this night received advices from our Moollah that he had waited on the Nabob, who seemed very pleasant but the Dewan otherwise: and that the Nabob had something to say to him tomorrow.

Friday 30th. This day our Moollah and Brahmin Paupa waited on the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie, as was yesterday ordered, who were very kindly received; from which we infer, it being the opinion also of many of the Natives, that they are working some evil designs against us.

Saturday, 31st. The Nabob sent his Chobadars as a safe guard to Egmore and our other new towns."

A three days' calm succeeded, after which the following entry appears in the Consultation Book:

"Wednesday 4th February. The Nabob Dawood Khan having been several days at St. Thomé, and our Moollah attending him, whom he sent for before he arrived there, pretending great business of importance, and having not yet imparted anything; he was ordered yesterday to wait on the Nabob to receive his commands, and know the occasion of his being sent for; who received for answer that he (the Nabob) expected some Englishmen to come to him, and that too not without a present; pretending how much he had been our friend, having never wrote against us to Court nor informed the King of our revenues, to whom was due a great sum for arrears thereof. The Moollah returning this morning to carry an answer to what the Nabob demanded, it was resolved as follows: That whereas he (the Nabob) had sent for the English, French, Dutch, Danes and Portuguese (from which we infer and are jealous that he has an order from the King to oblige all Europeans on this side the Country to give security for all Piracies committed in these seas, as they have forced them to do at Surat) it is resolved that no English go; besides should any be sent, we could not avoid a present going with them, which would be of ill consequence to the Company's affairs for the future, we having given him a present about six months since, which would not only be pleaded hereafter as customary by himself but by all succeeding Nabobs. And as to our revenues, we ordered our Moollah to tell him they were only raised upon our own people, and such acquired considerable fortunes in our service; and that we were now ready to demonstrate, not only that we daily gave subsistence to at least two hundred thousand people subjects to the Mogul, but that there also arose yearly by the trade of the place, a vast sum to the King's treasury; and whereas we imported to a great amount of silver and gold we exported nothing but the produce of the country and the labour of his people; and that rather than be subject to such frequent presents, it would be more to the Company's advantage that the King gave us some years to get in our effects, and then demolish our settlement and quit his

country. And this message the Moollah is ordered to deliver, resolving to send no English nor present."

It would seem from these entries that Daud had not yet disclosed to the Governor or his messengers the orders which he had received from the Mogul; that his object thus far had been to throw the English off their guard by leading them to suppose that he had come to St Thomé merely for the purpose of inducing them to give him another complimentary present; and that under the guise of friendship he was endeavouring to entice the Governor to put into his power two or three of the English servants of the Company, whom he might keep as hostages or send to the Mogul. It would also seem that the Governor, if he did not already know the terms of the Mogul's orders, had a shrewd suspicion of their purport. He therefore prudently determined that no Englishman should go to the Nawab's camp, and that Daud should be given clearly to understand that whatever his demands might be, they would not be acceded to. The result of his adopting this course was to force the Nawab to show his hand, to disclose the orders he had received from his master, the Mogul, and to commence the blockade without more ado. For on the following morning news came to the Fort that the Nawab had stopped all provisions and goods from coming into or going out of the town; and about noon the Moollah returned from St Thomé, to inform the Governor that the Nawab had sent for them and shown them the Mogul's order of which he brought back a copy. Whereupon the Trainbands and Portuguese militia were at once raised, and stationed at their appointed posts. The declaration made by the Moollah was as follows:

"This day (Friday 6th February 1702) the Nabob, Dewan, Imaum Beague, and Mahomed Amin Mir Sheriff sent for us to

the Dewan's house; where the Nabob told me that the great God knows that he had ever had a hearty respect for the English and did never wish them any hurt, saying, here is the Hosbulhocum which the King has sent me to seize Factories and all their effects; which as I style myself the King's slave, I must obey him, though, says he, we do not care to fight them, but in case they begin we are ready. The Nabob likewise told me, that we have received of the late wreck (the *Advice* frigate, in which the Governor had lately been to Fort St. David) seven hundred thousand Pagodas, which appertains to the King, and we must be answerable for it, or if we had any firmauns to this purpose we must show them, which is the reason your effects are seized by the King's orders, whose command we must obey.

I did see the two Hosbulhocums, one to the Nabob and one to the Dewan, the one sealed with wax and the other with ink, to which the Nabob did bid me send an answer. The Dewan at the same time telling me I should not be dejected, for they would be answerable for double what should be lost[1]."

On receipt of this information the Governor wrote at once to the Nawab:

"To his Excellency Dawood Khan.

This morning our Moollah came to me, who shows me the copy of an Order said to be from the great Assid Khan, charging all Europeans with Piracy, and that by a writing they are answerable for the same. We have been informed that there was such a writing extorted from the English, French and Dutch at Surat, which amongst us is of no value, being forced from us; nor will the same be regarded more particularly by us, who have been so great sufferers ourselves; and besides our King have not been at so little charge as two hundred thousand Pagodas to extirpate those villains.

The goods you have seized today, I doubt not but you were advised what value was thereof.

As to what your Excellency was pleased to say regarding the wreck, we have the law of God and all nations on our side; for no ship is a wreck, whilst her proprietors keep possession, and had you taken the least thing of her, you must have been accountable, as you will be for many things you have already done.

Your Hosbulhocum says, we are not to be confined; and your Excellency said to the Moollah that you are not to fight us, but are resolved if possible to starve us by stopping all

[1] Wheeler I. 387.

provisions. We can put no other construction on this, than declaring a war with all Europe nations, and accordingly we shall act.

Fort St. George, 6th February 1702."

The next day we find the following entry in the Consultation Book:

"Saturday, 7th. This day the Nabob's forces plundered our out towns of some straw and paddy, and drove away the inhabitants; and the poor people that lived in our suburbs and Blacktown, being so intimidated by the approach of the Moors army, and the preparations we made for our defence, several thousands deserted us; and the Farmers of the Tobacco and Betel complaining that they could not collect the revenues by reason of these troubles, and more particularly Betel being stopped which would in a few days occasion great clamours amongst the inhabitants; so that for the encouragement of all to steal it in, we have ordered that the Farmers cease from collecting these revenues till the troubles are over."

On the same day the following letter was received from the Nawab:

"From Dawood Khan Nabob to the Governor of Chinnapatam.

I received your letter and observe the contents thereof; and as to what you write about stopping provisions and goods and your trade, it is done by the King's order, as a means to interdict your trade. You say that the King of England has spent 200,000 Pagodas to destroy the Pirates, which was our King made sensible of, it would redound to your advantage.

You also wrote something else, but as for me I have no other order from the King than mentioned to you; but if you have any ill designs, I know how to deal with you; but I give you my best advice because I wish you well."

In reply to which Governor Pitt at once wrote:

"I received your Excellency's letter and observe the contents; and as I take it, in that paper you call the King's order, there is nothing about stopping provisions, for that in all parts of the world is publishing a war between nation and nation: though we have sufficient for our people for two years, besides the sea open to us.

That our King has been at 200,000 Pagodas charge to suppress Pirates, is a thing known to all nations, as also to yours, for four of his men of war were in this road.

We have lived in this country nearly one hundred years, and never had any ill designs, nor can your Excellency or any one else charge us with any; and it is very hard that such unreasonable orders should be issued out against us only, when they relate to all Europeans, none excepted, as I can perceive; and whether it be for the good of your kingdom to put such orders in execution, your Excellency is the best judge.

We are upon the defensive part and so shall continue remembering the unspeakable damages you have not only done us in our estates, but also in our reputation, which is far more valuable to us, and will be most resented by the King of our nation.

Thomas Pitt."

The same day the Governor sent general letters to Fort St David, Masulipatam and Vizagapatam, with a translation of the Mogul's Hosbulhocum, giving leave to the Company's servants in the two last places, which had no defences, to come into Fort St George, if they apprehended that the Mogul's orders "would any ways affect them."

The next day news was brought to the garrison from their out-guards "that a party of horse were drawing down towards their Washers, who had cloth in their hands to a considerable amount," upon which they sent out a party of horse and foot to protect the same, whose appearance caused the enemy to march off.

The next four days' entries in the Consultation Book are as follows[1]:

"Monday 9th. Last night the Governor received a letter from the Dewan, the purport of which was, that matters were not to be accommodated by letters, but by sending some judicious person. Whereupon the Governor summoned a Council, with the Mayor, Military Officers and chief inhabitants of the place, to consider what was most proper to be done. Upon which it is resolved to send our Moollah, who by reason of his caste they dare not affront or abuse, who is to hear what they have to say, but answer to nothing until he has direction from the Governor. Accordingly this night he is ordered to go to St. Thomé.

This day again we had many thousands of the inhabitants

[1] Wheeler I. 392–394.

deserted their habitations, being mostly women and children. We heard that the Nabob had taken four Englishmen prisoners at St. Thomé, coming overland from Fort St. David, being some sailors belonging to the *Advice* frigate and soldiers of that place, who had leave to come hither.

Tuesday, 10th. The Merchants acquaint us that the Moors have seized 40 oxloads of the Company's cloth, and carried it into St. Thomé, being come away before their orders could reach their Factors for not sending more; and they further acquaint us, that they understand the Nabob has sent to seize all cloth in the Weavers' hands with their accompts.

Wednesday 11th. This day again the Governor summoned a General Council, and produced a letter he had wrote to the French, Dutch and Danes, to advise them of our circumstances and the occasion thereof; also of the necessity of our joining together in this matter; which was debated and agreed that it should be translated into Portuguese, but to defer the sending of it till tomorrow night, in expectation to have some news from our Moollah before that time.

Thursday, 12th. This day the Governor summoned a General Council to acquaint them with what message the Moollah had brought from the Nabob at St. Thomé, which was such rhodomantine stuff that we could hardly give credit to it. He demanded possession of our Mint; that his people should come into our Town, and view our Godowns, and take an account of our estates; and that we should put one hundred men of theirs in possession of the Blacktown; and that then he would write to the King that we had obeyed his order, and make an attestation on our behalfs, unto which we must wait an answer. Otherwise he would fall in on us, and make us surrender by force of arms, and cut us all off. He also told the Moollah that if we were merchants, what need had we of such a Fortification and so many guns, which is an argument which has been much used by the New Company's servants, since their dropping into this country; and as we have been informed, the same has been urged to the King, and the great men of the Kingdom at the Camp.

It was agreed that no answer be returned to this message, as not being worth our taking notice of, but tacitly to defy their threats."

In the meanwhile some of the inhabitants of St Thomé, which had become the headquarters of the besiegers, seem to have become much alarmed at a rumour which had reached them, that the English were preparing to employ some of their

ships to bombard the town. It is highly improbable that this rumour had any other foundation than the fear of the Nawab and the Dewan for their own safety, and the alarm, which as it appears from a despatch sent home subsequently by the Governor, had been created amongst the besiegers by the shells which had fallen from time to time in their midst, when they approached too near the Fort. To have bombarded St Thomé would have been a flagrant breach of the peace between England and Portugal, and would have been bitterly resented by the Portuguese inhabitants of Fort St George, who had always been faithful adherents of the Company, and were now actively engaged in the defence of the Fort. With a view to dissuade the Governor from committing any such outrage, the Bishop wrote to him apparently in great perturbation, pointing out that the Portuguese at St Thomé had on all occasions behaved as true friends to the English and had always appreciated the kindnesses shown them by the Governor. In reply the Governor at once sent him the following letter:

"To his Lordship the Bishop of St. Thomé.

I received your Lordship's letter with the Protest and observe the contents thereof, and shall take care to preserve the good union between their Majesties the King of Portugal and the King of Great Britain, and the friendship that is between your Lordship and us, for which I have a great value; not in the least doubting that your Lordship or any of your nation, would by advice or otherwise give any assistance to our unreasonable and unjust enemies. So craving your Lordship's blessing for success to our arms against them, and wishing you all health and prosperity

I am

Your Lordship's most obedient
humble servant,
Thomas Pitt."

Some days later the Governor sent the Nawab, Dewan and Buxie a present of 48 China oranges

which seems to have encouraged the Buxie to try his hand at diplomacy. For on the 20th of February he wrote to the Governor with a proposal that the latter should write to the Mogul humbly laying the lives and estates of the English at Fort St George at his Majesty's mercy; and that the Nawab should forward this letter, and intercede on their behalf, if in consideration for so doing, the Governor undertook in the course of the next four years to pay a great sum into the Mogul's treasury and to keep the sea clear of pirates. It need hardly be said that the Governor declined to consider this suggestion.

On the 21st of February the Moollah came back from St Thomé and acquainted the Governor "with abundance of discourse he had with the Nabob, from whom he had great intimations that they wanted from the English a very great sum of money, to which," to quote from the Consultation Book, "we bid him answer that we owed them nothing, their King nor their country, nor would give them anything." Four days later, however, the Governor so far relented as to send them 200 more oranges, 100 for the Nawab, and the other hundred to be divided equally between the Dewan and the Buxie.

Early in March answer came from the Dutch at Negapatam and the Danes at Tanjore, to whom applications for assistance had been made by the English at the Fort. "The former," the Council record in the Consultation Book, "made a specious excuse for not assisting us with men, saying they are under fear of troubles from the Tanjore country; concluding with a feigned strain of sorrow and wishes for a happy issue from our troubles. The Danes allege that their circumstances are very weak, having had great mortality amongst their Europeans both ashore and belonging to their ships; but they sent a sloop of provisions."

On the 5th of March advice was brought to the Fort that the French Secretary from Pondicherry had arrived at St Thomé and "presented the Nabob, Dewan and Buxie in liquors and rarities to the amount by calculation of about eight hundred Pagodas." A week later news came that the Dutch had brought a public present for the Nawab, consisting of scarlet cloth, silks, China and Japan ware and spices, besides a private present the amount of which was not known. That it was considerable may be inferred from the fact that the Dutch envoys before their departure were commended by the Nawab for obeying his commands: and the Governor's Moollah was asked why the English did not also come. His answer was that the repeated indignities to which they had been subjected was a sufficient reason.

In the meanwhile information had arrived at the Fort that the dispute between the English at Surat and the Mogul's Governor respecting the piracies had been finally settled, "the English having paid for the two ships taken by the Pirates in the Straits of Malacca upwards of 282,000 rupees in broadcloth and other goods[1]." This news was confirmed by the Governor's Moollah at St Thomé, who informed the Governor that the Nawab had heard to the same effect from the Mogul's Court; and that he had told the Nawab that it now behoved him to withdraw his forces; but that the Nawab had answered that he could allege a thousand things against the English beyond their power to defend, at the same time offering to make up the quarrel if he were paid 30,000 rupees. In reply the Governor sent him some more Pegu oranges. These repeated offerings of oranges instead of pagodas or rupees seem to have been too much

[1] Wheeler I. 402.

at last for Daud, who sent them back, saying they were only fit for children.

At length on the 8th of April the following entry occurs in the Consultation Book:

"The Nabob and his army having lain here a considerable time, stopping all trade and provisions and very much increasing the Company's charges, which has not only been very prejudicial to the Company in their trade and revenues, but likewise to the whole place in general; and finding now that they decline very much in their demands, which we impute to the advice they have that the merchants' demands at Surat are satisfied; we have thought fit, to prevent greater inconveniences to employ our Selim Beague, an inhabitant of this town to offer them the sum of 18,000 Rupees: provided they deliver up to our merchants the goods and money they have seized belonging to this place and Fort St David; which sum of 18,000 Rupees, considering the very long time they have been here, we believe will be no inducement for him to come again or any of his successors hereafter; and accordingly it is agreed that the President pays the said sum upon the terms aforesaid and not otherwise."

The Nawab having declined these terms, the siege continued for another month, before a settlement could be come to, the terms of which appear in the following entry in the Consultation Book:

"Sunday 3rd May. The Nabob and the King's officers having lain before this place upwards of three months, and interdicted all manner of trade and provisions coming into this place; the latter growing dear make it uneasy for the inhabitants; and there having been some overtures of accommodation from the enemy; which the Governor has been daily importuned by all sorts of people to accept of, occasions his summoning this General Council; whom he acquainted with every particular as entered after this Consultation. Which being debated, it was agreed by the majority that the proposals be accepted of; and that the same be negociated and settled by Chinna Serapa and Narrain, acquainting the Governor from time to time what progress they make therein.

The proposals made by Kisnojee Dodojee, by order of the Nabob and Dewan, to the Governor of Madraspatam for an accommodation of the present differences.

Whereas by a late order from the King all trading and provisions with the English has been interdicted at Fort St

George and Fort St. David, we the Nabob and Dewan do now reverse the said order, and do grant them free liberty to trade in all places as heretofore they have done, without let or molestation: and to confirm the same to our people, do promise to give them our perwannas directed to all Fouljdars, Killadars, Corrodees, Deshairs, Destramokys, Poligars and inhabitants of all places whereto they trade, to be carried by our Chobdars.

That whatever moneys etc have been taken away, either upon the roads or in towns, or in any place whatever, said moneys etc shall be returned to the value of a Cowry, and our merchants set at liberty.

That the Villages, and all that has been taken from them shall be returned, and due satisfaction made for all damages according to account.

And whereas their trade has been stopped by the King's order goods and moneys seized, it is requisite that an order from the King be procured to revoke the former, which we oblige ourselves to do; and upon compliance with the aforesaid articles, twenty thousand Rupees is to be paid by the English to the Nabob, and five thousand privately to the Dewan; of which sums half is to be paid upon clearing the Villages, returning the grain they have there seized, taking off the stop on trade and provisions, and sending the Chobdars to the aforesaid officers with perwannas to all parts of the country whereby to order our trade to be as free as formerly, and to restore all goods which were seized and now lie at St. Thomé; and when the whole business is completed, the English to pay the other half."

Two days after the acceptance by the Governor of these proposals, the siege was raised; and a further present was made to the Nawab of liquors and rarities to the value of 1000 rupees[1]. Daud then marched away with his army. A continuous succession of festivities ensued[2]. On the 19th of May the Portuguese militia, on the 20th one company of the regulars, and on the 21st the other company were, we find from the Consultation Book, "handsomely treated with dinners under a large tent spread in the Inner Fort; and the Commission Officers of the respective Companyes those evenings supped with the Governor." On the 25th of May

[1] Wheeler 1. 405.

[2] Wheeler 2. 9.

"the Governor and Council and the Trainbands were splendidly entertained with a supper at the Company's Garden they having also been under arms in our late troubles."

From a letter sent by him to Captain Harrison the next year it would seem that the whole of the engagements made by Daud Khan for the return of the Company's goods and the release of the factors whom he had imprisoned were not complied with until August; and that it was not till then that the second half of the stipulated 25,000 rupees was paid[1]. Pitt's successor in after days was less cautious in paying away the Company's money before getting his consideration for it, as appears from a letter of the Court to him of the 28th December 1711[2]: "Wee dont at all like," they say, "the account given about Rajah Syrrup Sing's detaining Lieutenant Hugonin and Ensign Ray, and a present of two hundred Pagodas given for their releasement, which thô taken the men are where they were. *Had the like case happen'd in the late Presidents time he would have recover'd them both at a tenth part of the Money, or rather the Rajah would not have dared to attempt the surprizing of them.*"

The more narrowly the proceedings of Governor Pitt during this siege are scrutinised, the more difficult it becomes to find any flaw in them. The value of the goods, which the Mogul's general had been forced to restore on the cessation of hostilities must have been largely in excess of the amount paid to him. By dint of his practical shrewdness, stubborn determination and judicious concessions, the Governor had firmly impressed on the native mind the impregnability of the feeble defences of Fort St George and the hopelessness of any attempt

[1] Hedges 3. 85. [2] Hedges 3. 123.

on the part of the Mogul's armies to invest the fortified coast settlement of the English, so long as their command of the sea was assured. The effects of his success were far reaching; for no further blockade of the Fort was attempted by the natives of India during his term of office or that of any of his successors. The failure of Daud Khan, one of the most redoubted of the Mogul's generals, to compel its slender garrison to surrender did more than anything else could have done to sustain the fast waning prestige of the English in India. And it left no ill-will behind; for the Governor had been careful throughout the siege to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the Nawab and his Duan, by the omission of any of the customary courtesies to which their rank entitled them. At the same time, much as he had done for England during this crisis, he had done fairly well for his own estate. For, as will be seen, he had found time during the blockade, notwithstanding the stress of his official responsibilities, to secure for himself by perfectly legitimate means the possession of the famous Pitt diamond.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GREAT DIAMOND LEAVES INDIA

THE proximity of Fort St George to the Kingdom of Golconda must have acted as a strong inducement to the residents in the fort to speculate in diamonds. That the diamond trade was recognised by their employers as a perfectly legitimate business for them to engage in, is evidenced by the action taken by the Court of the Old Company, when their rivals the New Company shortly after their formation endeavoured in vain to stop it[1]. In 1700 Captain Heath, who had been a member of the Court of the Old Company, having lost his seat at the April election, transferred his services to the New Company, and being one of the owners of the ship *Neptune*, which belonged to the Old Company, in revenge for the loss of his seat on the Court, he persuaded her captain and purser on her arrival in the Port of London to inform the King's officers what private goods they had on board belonging to the Old Company's servants. On receipt of this information a parcel of diamonds and some other goods were seized by the Customs officers, on the plea that they were illicit imports in contravention of the New Company's Charter, which, although it had preserved the Old Company's right to trade for the next three years, had not expressly conferred a similar privilege on their servants. This pretension

[1] Bruce 3. 333.

the Old Company resisted on behalf of its employés, and took the case before the Court of Exchequer, who decided that "it was no trading within the meaning of the Act for the Old Company's servants in India at any time to bring home their estates acquired there." Prior to this decision, and whilst the case was still pending, the Court of the Old Company wishing to protect their officers' goods whatever the law on the question might be, wrote to Fort St George, informing the Council there of what had happened, and directing orders to be communicated to the captains of all their ships to place for the future the Old Company's mark on whatever private goods they had on board to prevent the repetition of further claims of this nature. The case created a great stir at the time amongst the Old Company's officers in India. "Captain Heath's apostacy," Governor Pitt writes to the Secretary of the Old Company, "was a surprise to me, Mr Braddyl having informed me some time before, that Captain Heath was unanimously importun'd by the Committee to become Governor of this place[1]." As will be seen hereafter, Mr Braddyl was a man whose statements could not always be relied upon. It is clear that the Court would not have taken the course they did in this matter, if they had entertained any objection to their servants in India engaging in the diamond trade.

That the trade was also recognised by the Mogul's Government in India as a perfectly legitimate one for Europeans is clear from the evidence of the famous French traveller and jeweller, Tavernier, who had dealt in it very largely for many years and having visited the diamond mines in the Golconda district on three different occasions (1642, 1645, and 1651) in the course of his voyages and bought

[1] Hedges 3. 67.

several very valuable jewels there, was afterwards very warmly received at the Court of the Mogul Aurungzeb (1657), who showed him the finest of his own Imperial jewels, including the Great Mogul diamond. To this great potentate and to his uncle Shaista Khan, Viceroy of Bengal, Tavernier sold some of the most valuable of his jewels. Illustrations and descriptions of these, as well as of the most famous of the Mogul's jewels which he was permitted to examine, are given in his very interesting work, which was first translated into English in 1682 and a copy of which seems to have been at Fort St George in Governor Pitt's time, who, as appears from his correspondence, had consulted it carefully. We may safely assume that many of his subordinates had done the same. For it was then and remained long afterwards the standard authority throughout Europe on Indian diamonds and other precious stones, the districts where they were to be found, the manner in which the mines were worked, the treatment of the stones and the method of calculating their value[1]. There is no reason whatever to doubt that before and after Governor Pitt's day, the private trade in jewels was carried on by the Company's servants with the full knowledge and approval of their employers and of the Native Government in India. It is desirable to clear up this point, in view of some of the allegations subsequently made in England by Pitt's detractors when his purchase of the great diamond had become generally known.

That it was a very speculative trade involving considerable pecuniary risk to those who engaged in it is also clear. Success in it demanded not only a fair knowledge of the value of the stones,

[1] See Tavernier's *Travels in India*, edited by V. Ball, 1882. Macmillan and Co.

combined with caution and skill in bargaining, but also good luck. The native merchants by their long experience were quite alive to the quality of the gems they brought for sale, and were by no means disposed to part with them for less than their market value in India. They had many ingenious means of concealing flaws in them, some of which are explained by Tavernier, whilst others are referred to in Governor Pitt's correspondence. In reply to a letter from home from Sir Stephen Evans, Queen Anne's Court Jeweller, he says on one occasion: "'Twas never yet known here that the Brahminies greas'd a stone to hide the fowles, but wee all know they are Rogues enough and studdy nothing else but cheating[1]." Apart from fraud on the part of the natives, unwary purchasers learnt sometimes by bitter experience the folly of trusting implicitly to the advice of some of their own comrades, who had gained the reputation of being good judges of the quality of diamonds. Governor Pitt himself was badly bitten once when he was induced to share in a considerable venture with his old enemy Charles Eyre in certain stones injudiciously selected for them both by Mr Meverell, one of the members of his Council. He speaks feelingly more than once of this unfortunate transaction[2]. In writing home to Eyre with reference to it, he expresses a sarcastic hope that when he is superseded in his Governorship, his successor will take on Meverell as his jeweller; and suggests at the same time that as Eyre is a generous man, and can never have intended to raise his fortune by ruining his brother Indians, he will remember him as the man he has injured so seriously and leave him a plentiful legacy, if he does not make him his heir. But quite apart from the danger of being cheated by the native

[1] Hedges 3. 128.

[2] Hedges 3. 77.

merchants, the buyers of diamonds at Fort St George ran a very serious risk of losing their jewels altogether on their way home on the high seas by shipwreck or by capture in time of war. A signal instance of this occurred, when the *Bedford* East Indiaman, which had on board a magnificent diamond of the best quality, which seems to have been purchased by the Governor about the same time and from the same merchant as the great Pitt diamond, was lost with all hands on its way home. This diamond weighed 58½ carats and its declared value according to the invoice was 6500 pagodas. Similar mishaps must have befallen many of the English residents at Fort St George from time to time. Nor could those who were lucky enough to get their diamonds safely home always rely upon receiving a fair price for them. If times were bad, or the market had been glutted, their profits were often grievously curtailed, even when the agents whom they had trusted to dispose of their jewels had not, as they occasionally did, played them false. It was said that the rogues in London were not to be outdone by those in India. "Be sure," the Governor writes on one occasion to his son, "to be at the opening of all bulses of diamonds consigned to you, for I have been told that some has the knack of changing stones, which is one of the worst of villanies[1]." It would also appear from another of his letters that Diamond Syndicates were not unknown in London, even at that early date. "It is reported here," he writes, "that a company of hucksters and sharpers has been formed" (in London) "to buy all consignments of diamonds. I hope you allow none such to buy any of mine to my detriment[2]." But with all its pitfalls and dangers, the diamond trade had many attractions. It was indeed a lottery:

[1] Dropmore I. 26. [2] Dropmore I. 38.

but it was a lottery in which great prizes were occasionally drawn and there were probably very few Englishmen in Fort St George who did not habitually take a hand in it. The money value of diamonds was considerably higher in England than in India, and until the later years of Pitt's Governorship, the prices which they fetched in England seem not to have been disclosed to the Indian diamond merchants, and great care had been taken by the servants of the Company to keep back from their consignees the prices which they had paid in India for the stones. Writing to his son in February 1707, when sending home a bulse of diamonds on the *Tankerville*, the Governor says: "They are very good and every one will make a brilliant, and they are not dear considering the times, the like of which has not been known for many years, which we impute in a great measure to the villany of Pluymer, who informed the merchants here how they sold in England[1]." In the earlier years of his Presidency, very good bargains in them were made; and they were moreover a very convenient form of remittance from India to Europe. By far the larger part of Governor Pitt's shipments on account of other parties consisted of diamonds[2]; and it is not unlikely that if we had the invoices of the goods shipped home by his subordinates, we should find that he only followed the practice which had prevailed in the Fort for generations: and that it was the exception rather than the rule for any of the Company's servants not to have his own private little purse or bag of gems (bulses, as they were termed), which he replenished from time to time as opportunity offered, until it was full enough to make it worth his while to send it and its contents to England. Writing to Mr Robert Raworth, an old friend

[1] Dropmore 1. 25. [2] Hedges 3. 125.

though a member of the New Company, some few months before he bought his great diamond, Governor Pitt expresses a hope that if he and his men are ousted from Fort St George by the home authorities, they will be permitted to march out with all the honours of war[1], "with our arms and Diamonds in our pockets, Drums beating and Colours flying." There can be little doubt, that if they had been compelled to march out, the pockets of many of them would have been well lined.

On the 18th of October 1701, whilst Norris was still at the camp of the Mogul, and a few days before he received his ultimatum, Governor Pitt had written to his London agent and friend, Sir Stephen Evans, the Court Jeweller and banker:

> "I have also heard that there are two or three large stones up the Countrey which I believe had been here, but that the troubles of the Countrey have prevented it, besides they ask soe excessively Dear for such Stones that 'tis Dangerous meddling with 'em, *but if that Stone comes hither shall as near as I can follow your advice and orders therein*, and should I meet with it here is little money to be taken up, *besides you have given your orders to Soe many in this matter that wee shall interfere with one another*[2]."

It would seem from this letter that some rumours of the great diamond had already reached London; that Sir Stephen Evans had sent out directions concerning it to several persons; and that the Governor was a little nettled that others besides himself had been consulted about it. In little more than a fortnight after writing this to Evans, he not only came across the stone itself, but had had an opportunity of examining it carefully, and had even obtained a model of it. It had been brought to Fort St George by Ramchund, one of the most eminent of the native diamond merchants, together

[1] Hedges 3. 69. [2] Hedges 3. 125.

with some smaller stones, one of which was probably the fine diamond which the Governor sent home a few months later by the *Bedford* and which went down with that ill-fated vessel. As soon as he had got his model, he sent it to Evans with the following letter:

"To Sir Stephen Evans, Knt.

Fort St. George Nov. 6th. 1701.

Sr. This acompanyes the modell of a Stone I have lately seene; itt weighs Mangs. 303, and cartts. 426. It is of an excellent christaline water without any fowles, onely att one end in the flat part there is one or two little flaws which will come out in cutting, they lying on the surface of the Stone, the price they ask for it is prodigious being two hundred thousand pags.: thô I believe less than one" (hundred thousand) "would buy it. If it was designed for a Single Stone, I believe it would not loose about ¼ part in cutting, and bee a larger Stone than any the Mogull has, I take it. Pro rata as stones goe I thinke 'tis inestimable. Since I saw it, I have bin perusing of Tavernier, where there is noe Stone soe large as this will bee when cutt. I write this singly to you, and noe one else, and desire it may bee Kept private, and that you'l by the first of land or sea conveighance give mee your opinion thereon, for itt being of Soe great a vallue I believe here are few or none can buy it. I have put it" (*i.e.* the model) "up Inclos'd in a little box and mark'd it S.E. which the Capt will deliver you, my hearty service to you. I am

Sr. Your most oblidged humble servant,

T. Pitt."

On receipt of this letter Sir Stephen Evans lost no time in writing back:

"London, August 1st. 1702.

I have received yours with a modell of a great diamond weighing 426 Car. therein you give an account of itts water and goodness, certainly there never was such a Stone heard of before, and as for Price, they asked 200,000 pags., though you believe less than 100,000 would buy. Wee are now gott in a Warr, the French King has his hands and heart full, soe he cant buy such a Stone. There is no Prince in Europe can buy itt, soe would advise you not to meddle in itt, for the Interest Yearly would come to a great sum of Money to be dead, as for the Diamonds

Fort S^t George Nov^r 6^th 1701

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S^r

This accompanys the modell of a stone I have lately seen, itt weighs Mangelis 303 & Carr^ts 426, is of an excellent christaline water without any fowles onely att one end in the flat part there is one or two little flaws w^ch will come out in cutting, they lying on the surface of the stone; the price they ask for it is prodigious being ~~~~ two hundred thousand pag^s tho I believe less then one would buy it, if it was designed for a single stone. I believe it would not loose above 1/4 p^t in cutting and bee a larger stone than any the Mogull has, and take the pro rato as stones goe I think bee inestimable since w^ch I have bin perusing of Tavernier where there is noe stone soe large as this will bee when cutt, I write this singly to you & tis one thing I desire it may bee kept private and that youl by the first of Convenience give mee your opinion thereon for it being of soe great a value, I believe there are few or none can buy it. I have putt it up in a little box & marked it S: E w^ch the Capt^n will deliver you, my hearty service to you I am

S^r

Your most obliged humble servant

T Pitt

To S^r Ste: Evans K^t
Present London

Facsimile of letter written to Sir Stephen Evans by Thomas Pitt enclosing a model of the Pitt diamond before its purchase

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received per Duchess can't sell them for 8s a Pagoda. Mr Alvares tells me he received some Diamonds from Mr Meverell that he sold for 6s a Pagoda, soe there is noe encouragement to send for diamonds."

If this letter from the Court Jeweller had reached Fort St George earlier than it did, and Governor Pitt had acted on the warning contained in it, he would have saved himself and others from many an anxious hour. But long before he had received Evans' letter, he had yielded to the temptation, as most men in his place would have done, and bought the stone. The following account of its purchase written by him eight years afterwards from recollection, whilst stranded at Bergen on his way back to England, is no doubt substantially correct. It contains nothing in any way at variance with the extant documents written about the time when the diamond was bought:

"1710. July 29. Bergen. Since my coming into this melancholy place of Bergen, I have been often thinking of the most unparalleled villany of William Fraser, Thomas Frederick and Surapa, a black merchant, who brought a paper before Governor Addison" (the brother of the great Joseph Addison and the successor of Pitt in the Governorship of Fort St George) "in Council insinuating that I had unfairely gott possession of a large diamond, which tending soe much to the prejudice of my reputation and the ruine of my estate that I thought it necessary to keep by mee this true relation how I purchased it, in all respects, that soe, in case of sudden mortality, my chilldren and friends may bee apprised of the whole matter, and soe be enabled thereby to putt to silence and confound those and all other villains in their base attempts against either. I haveing not my books by me at present, I cannot bee positive as to the time; but for the manner of purchasing it, I doe here declare and assert under my hand, in the presence of God Almighty, as I hope for salvation through the meritts and intercession of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that this is the truth; and if it bee not, lett God deny it to mee and my children for ever; which I would be soe farr from saying, much less leave it under my hand, that I would not be guilty of the least untruth in the

relation, for the riches and honour of the whole world. About two or three years after my arrivall at Maderass, which was in July 1689, I heard that there were large diamonds in the country to bee sold, which I incouraged to be brought downe, promiseing to bee their chapman if they would bee reasonable therein; upon which Ramchund, one of the most eminent diamond dealers in those parts, came downe about December 1701, and brought with him a large rough stone, about 305 mangeleens, and some small ones, which myselfe and others bought. But hee asking a very extravagant price for the great one, I did not thinke of medling with it, when hee left it with mee for some days, and then came and took it away againe; and did soe severall times, not insisting upon less than two hundred thousand pagodoes, as I best remember. I did not bid him above thirty thousand, and had little thoughts of buying it, for that I considered there were many and great risgoes to bee run, not only in cutting it, but also whether it would prove fowle or cleane or the water goode; besides I thought it too great an amount to be ventured home on one bottome. But Ramchund resolving to return speedily to his owne country, soe that I best remember, it was in February following, hee came againe to mee (with Vincaly Chuttee who was allways with him when I discoursed him about it) and pressed me to know whether I resolved to buy it, when hee came down to 100,000 pagodoes, and something under, before wee parted, when wee agreed upon a day to meete and make a finall end thereof one way or other, which I believe was the latter end of the aforesaid month, or the beginning of March. Wee accordingly mett in the Consultation room, where after a great deal of talke, I brought him down to 55,000 pagodoes, and advanced to 45,000, resolving to give noe more, and he likewise resolved not to abate, soe delivered him up the stone, and wee tooke a friendly leave of one another. Mr. Benyon was then writeing in my closett, with whom I discoursed what had passed, and told him now I was cleare of it, when about an hour after, my servant brought me word that Ramchund and Vincaly Chuttee were at the door; who being called in, they used a great many expressions in praise of the stone, and told mee hee had rather I should buy it than anybody: and to give an instance thereof offerd it for 50,000. Soe believing it must bee a pennyworth if it proved good, I offerd to part the 5000 pagodoes that was then between us, which hee would not hearken to, and was goeing out of the room againe, when he turned back and told mee I should have it for 49,000. But I still adhered to what I had before offerd him, when presently hee came to 48,000, and made a solemn vow that he would not part with it a pagodoe under; when I went againe into the closett with Mr. Benyon,

and told him what had passed, saying that if it was worth 47,500 it was worth 48,000, soe closed with him for that sum, when hee delivered mee the stone, for which I paid him very honourably, as by my books appears. And I here farther call God to witnesse that I never used the least threatening word at any of our meeteings to induce him to sell it mee, and God himselfe knows it never was as much in my thoughts soe to doe. Since which I have had frequent and considerable deallings with this man and ballanced severall accounts with him, and left upwards of 2,000 pagodoes in his hands at my comeing away: soe had I used the least indirect means to have gott it from him, would not hee have made himself satisfaction, when he has had my money soe often in his hands? Or would I have treated him afterwards as I did preferable to all other diamond merchants? As this is the truth, soe I hope for God's blessing on this and all other my affaires in this world, and eternall happiness hereafter[1]."

On the cover of this narrative the following direction was written:

"In case of the death of mee, Thomas Pitt, I direct that this paper, sealed as it is, bee delivered to my sone Robert Pitt."

It would be out of place at this stage of Governor Pitt's career to detail the circumstances which led to the presentation to Governor Addison of the infamous paper referred to in the opening paragraph of this circumstantial narrative, which contained nothing but vague insinuations unsupported by any evidence whatever. The main object of its compilers was evidently to blacken Pitt's reputation in the eyes of his successor and throw discredit on the reports which he had sent home to the Court of their own misdoings and characters. They were very much in the dark with regard to the circumstances in which the diamond had been acquired by him, but very anxious to induce Addison to believe that its purchase was not only a very dirty business, but calculated to prejudice the interests of the Company and to lead to complications with the Native Government. Governor

[1] Dropmore I. 48.

Pitt's own account of the transaction is corroborated by the independent testimony of Mr Salmon, author of *The Universal Traveller*, who on page 164 of the first volume of the 1752 edition of that work says that when diamonds of an extraordinary size were found in the mines, it was the practice to give the Mogul's agent the refusal of them[1], "though," he adds, "if a large diamond happens to be carried out of the mine, nobody questions the Proprietor how he came by it; he may sell it in any fair or market." He goes on to say, "It was a rich Black Merchant in the Mogull's Camp that sold the great Diamond to Mr Pitt about the year 1700, which he afterwards sold to the French King for upwards of £100,000, but I never could learn the exact sum. And this was so far from being a great Bargain, that Mr Pitt declared he lost Money by it. He gave £24,000 for that Diamond, and considering he was Governor of Fort St George for ten years, he might have made more money by trading with that sum than he did by the Diamond. I mention this because I was upon the Spot and thoroughly acquainted with the Transaction in India, and am able to refute the scandalous Stories that have been raised of the Means whereby the Governor acquired the Jewel. It lay some Months at Fort St George, in the hands of the Merchant's Agent that sold it, in order to obtain a Chapman for it, and Governor Pitt was the best Bidder; no Manner of Compulsion was used to obtain it." It may be doubted whether any cleaner record exists of the acquisition by an European of any famous jewel from an Oriental, than that of the Pitt diamond.

We have no authentic information of how the diamond came into the possession of Ramchund.

[1] Hedges 3. 134.

The two commonest versions of its earlier history may safely be disregarded as fabulous. The first is that it had been one of the eyes of a famous Hindu idol and was stolen by a French prisoner, who managed to escape with it to the coast. Apart from the fact that this tale is told of two other great diamonds, the "Orloff" and the "Moon of Mountains," the shape of the Pitt diamond in its rough state was such that it is difficult to understand how it could ever have been utilised as an eye even of the most grotesque idol[1]. The other story told of it is that it was stolen by a native slave who found it when working in the diamond mines and that he concealed it in a hole which he cut in his leg, from which, according to one account, it was violently extracted by Governor Pitt[2]. According to another account, the slave secreted it in a bandage, which he wrapped round the wound, and subsequently sold it to an English skipper who having taken him on board his ship under the pretence of getting the purchase money, threw him overboard and afterwards died of delirium tremens and remorse, having sold it to somebody else for £1000. The suggestion that the stone remained in the native's leg until Thomas Pitt violently extracted and took possession of it needs no comment[3]. The story of the skipper is almost equally improbable. To believe it we must assume not only very gross carelessness on the part of the managers of the mine, but also a confession by the thief to the skipper of the theft, and a further confession by the skipper of his murder of the thief. The tale, moreover, fails to account for the reports of the existence of the stone, which had reached not only Pitt but also Sir Stephen Evans

[1] Streeter's *Great Diamonds of the World*, pp. 107, 108 and 191.
[2] Streeter p. 169. [3] Hedges 3. 137.

in England before Ramchund brought it to Fort St George, and the subsequent rumours that were rife up country concerning it as having been seen in the mines[1]. These rumours led to inquiries by the Mogul, who sent for several of the merchants supposed to be implicated in the disappearance of the stone, in respect of which presumably the customary duty of £2 per cent. on the purchase money had not been paid into the Imperial Treasury[2]. If the finder of the diamond had escaped from the mine with the diamond hidden in his leg or in a bandage, and had afterwards sold it to a skipper, who had in his turn sold it to Pitt, it is difficult to understand how any rumours of its existence could have reached the Mogul. The probability is that the proprietors of the mine, thinking they could get a higher price from the English merchants than from the Mogul, entrusted Ramchund with the business of disposing of it, and that they were quite satisfied with the result. It is unlikely that, in view of the very costly wars in which he was then engaged and the enormous number of jewels he already possessed, the Mogul, who according to Tavernier "cared but little for stones and loved gold and silver much better[3]," would have given more for it than Pitt did. If the mine owners sold it to Pitt, its existence would be known to many persons in the mines: the rumour of its sale would ultimately reach the Mogul: and he would no doubt insist on receiving his share of the proceeds. That diamonds of great size and beauty were constantly on sale to Europeans by Indian merchants in this part of India is clear from Tavernier's description and illustration of the Great Table Diamond[4], which when cut weighed 242 carats, and which

[1] Hedges 3. 125, 127.
[2] Tavernier 2. 63.
[3] Tavernier 2. 135.
[4] Tavernier 2. 124.

was offered to him for sale by an Indian merchant for 500,000 rupees (£56,250); but which he believes he might have had for 450,000 rupees.

But although the tales of its earlier history may probably be regarded as apocryphal, the very prevalent popular belief in the bad luck that attaches to the ownership of great jewels is not likely to be shaken by the Governor's subsequent experiences. Any satisfaction he may have derived from being the proud possessor of the most famous diamond of the world, must have been greatly discounted by his continuous anxieties on its behalf, during the whole time it remained upon his hands. From the date of its purchase his most serious troubles with his employers and his family at home and with his own staff in India began. The Indian climate and his love of good living must have told upon his health and temper, to say nothing of the growing power of his enemies at home to injure him after the union of the two Companies. On the top of all came his anxieties and disappointments about the diamond. It is no wonder that he became more and more intolerant of those with whom he had the misfortune to fall out. In reading some of the more intemperate passages in some of his letters, it is only fair to bear these extenuating circumstances in mind.

His first difficulty with the diamond was to keep his possession of it a secret from his daily companions, a task in which he seems to have been more successful than might have been anticipated. For his associates in the Council and the garrison do not appear to have entertained any suspicion of his purchase of the stone, until long after it had been placed in safe keeping in London. The next step to be taken was to get it home. The performance of this duty he entrusted to his son

Robert, who had come out with him to India as a private merchant, and was already heartily sick of the Eastern trade, and anxious above all things to get back to England that he might enjoy himself in more congenial surroundings. Robert seems to have spent the greater part of his exile in voyages to China, in which, thanks to his father's help and interest, he had already acquired a moderate competency of his own. Writing to his mother two or three months after his first arrival with his father at Fort St George, he says, "We arrived here July 6th. I am bound to China in a few months." In the following April he had written to his uncle Mr Curgenven from Batavia, which place he describes as "the metropolis of India, well fortified with a garrison of 3000 European soldiers[1]." In November 1699 he had written again to his mother from Amoy, informing her that he had heard of his "cousin John Pitt's coming out in the New Company's service as President of the Coast of Coromandel and Consul for the King." "To all appearance," he writes, "the Old Company, in whose interest my father is, stand on a very bad footing; their servants in India being under the Consuls now come out, and the sending of Embassadors to negotiate at the Court being prejudicial to them." In the following month he was still at Amoy, and wrote in similar terms to his uncle Curgenven, "The establishment of the New Company has not a little surprised all people in these parts; the sending out Embassadors and Consuls looks as if they would drive all before them; notwithstanding they may happen to make good the old saying 'nihil violentum est diuturnum.'" A year afterwards, in December 1700, he wrote to his mother from Canton, "I am here supercargo of a Dane

[1] Dropmore I. 3.

ship freighted by the gentlemen of Madras, and if it please God, shall make no small advantage of it. On my return to Madras I intend going home by the first ship that sails thence for England." Two months later he was back at Fort St George, and wrote to his mother that he "continued in his resolution of coming home." "I find," he says, "my father wavering in the matter, but unless his positive demands detain me, I design for England next September[1]." He did not however return to England that year; for in the following October he was back at Canton, having apparently a very pleasant time there; for he wrote to a friend, "We live here very sociably together. Instead of bohea and damned strong sherry and country beer we drink every night good claret; and by midnight after the shake of the elbow and several hearty curses, some people by degrees abate the commissions on the gross." In December he wrote to his mother from Canton, "I am here supercargo of the *Hampshire*, freighted by the freemen of Madras, and thanks to the assistance of my father, in a post of the most trust, credit and profit of any private person in India." But it appears that he was still determined to return home as soon as possible; for he adds, "I hope to return to Fort St George ten days before the *Bedford* sails, on which I design for England." It was fortunate for him that his father did not allow him to carry out this intention. His early seafaring experiences seem to have made the Governor almost as good a judge of a ship as of a diamond, and he had misgivings of the *Bedford's* seaworthiness, which were fully justified by her fate, for on her way home she was lost at sea with all hands. When upbraiding Robert in after years for neglecting his advice in other matters, the Governor reminds

[1] Dropmore I. 4.

him of this[1]. "I little expected," he says, "you would have paid so little attention to the memorandums I gave you at parting, since my advice in one particular had saved you from utter ruin. You may remember how importunate you were to go home on the *Bedford*, and how uneasy you made me by your ill natured carreage, till I permitted your going on the *Loyal Cooke*." The *Loyal Cooke* was named after Sir Thomas Cook, the Chairman first of the Old Company and afterwards of the United Company, who was to his death a loyal friend and supporter of Governor Pitt. This consideration may possibly have had some weight in her selection by the Governor as the ship to take his son and diamond home. She left Fort St George on the 9th of October 1702, and carried Robert and the stone safely to London, with full instructions for the disposal of the latter and the future management of his father's affairs in England, which had hitherto been under the exclusive control of Robert's mother, with whom the Governor had lately been so much displeased that he had decided to supersede her, and to appoint as his agents in her place Sir Stephen Evans and her son Robert, an arrangement which, as might have been expected, led to considerable family friction and discord. The instructions given to Robert on this occasion were as follows:

"1702. October 9. Fort St. George. Having made Sir Stephen Evance and you my attorneys, revoking all others, I earnestly desire you to be carefull of my business in generall, and receive all papers from your mother to give you an insight therein.

I have shewed you severall letters, wherein you have seen complaints against your mother, which tend to my prejudice in many respects, to prevent which like for the future, she is no more to meddle in any business of mine.

I must also desire you to write mee by all conveyances

[1] Dropmore I. 11.

whatever, overland, Surat, or any other way: advising what relates to public and private affairs, and more especially what regards my interest, which I desire you to be very carefull and sollicitous in. And whereas I have intrusted under your care what is of great value, which you must by all means and diligence preserve, lett what accident will befall you, which God deliver you from; and if you should have the misfortune, which God forbid, to be taken by an enemy, you must be sure to throw overboard every paper you have, and secure *itt* in the best manner you can and be carefull afterwards that you are not discovered.

But if it pleases God that you arrive safe in England, I strictly charge you not to stirr out of the ship till Sir Stephen Evance or Mr. Alvarez comes on board, and would have you write from the first port you can send a letter to Sir Stephen Evance, desiring him to meet the ship as soon as possible, till when you will remain on board, for that you have business of importance to impart to him. You must also be very carefull of this concerne on board the ship at sea and in harbour[1]."

[1] Dropmore I. 5.

# CHAPTER XV

## THE UNION OF THE TWO COMPANIES

THE earlier months of the year 1702 were memorable for Governor Pitt not only by reason of the blockade of Fort St George and the acquisition of his great diamond, but also because before Daud's forces were withdrawn the Old East India Company had been compelled at last to consent to an amalgamation with its rivals. The Governor himself appears to have been opposed to the settlement arrived at, being confident that his employers ought to have obtained more favourable terms. But he had inadvertently helped to bring it about by the great impetus which he had given to his Company's trade at Madras. As has been seen, one of the earliest hopes expressed by him when entering on his Governorship had been that the time which had been wasted by the Company's officers in quarrelling with and ruining one another, might in future be spent in improving the Company's revenues and sending home full ships in season. He had already made a considerable fortune for himself in the Eastern trade, and no man could be better qualified than he was by his experience to achieve a phenomenal success for his employers in this branch of his duties. During his first two years of office, he had had exceptional opportunities of distinguishing himself in this direction. For the Company, stimulated by the near approach of its demise, had, by sending out to India

a larger number of ships than usual, made unprecedented efforts to secure large immediate returns. And in this, thanks to the ability of their new Governor, they seem to have been only too successful. It might have been well for them, in the long run, if their transactions and gains at this juncture had been smaller. For the Protectionists of that day were very alert in Parliament, and the shock of witnessing this sudden increase in the volume of the Eastern trade led them to take full advantage of the opportunity to obtain very drastic legislation, which was calculated to do serious injury to both Companies for some years to come. This legislation consisted of two Acts of Parliament[1], the first of which imposed an additional import duty of 15 per cent. on all wrought silks, Bengals, calicoes, muslins, and other stuffs of the manufacture of Persia, China or the East Indies, which might be imported into England between the 25th of March 1700 and the 30th of September 1701. The second[2], which was passed very shortly afterwards, and was supplementary to its predecessor, was entitled "An Act for the more effectual employing the Poor by encouraging manufactures in this Kingdom." Its preamble ran as follows: "Whereas it is most evident that the continuance of the trade to the East Indies in the same manner and proportion as it hath been for the two years last past must inevitably be to the great detriment of this Kingdom by exhausting the treasure thereof and melting down the coin, and taking away the labour of the people, whereby many of the manufactures of this nation are become excessively burdensome and chargeable to their respective parishes, and others are thereby compelled to seek for employment

[1] 11 and 12 Will. III, c. 3.
[2] 11 and 12 Will. III, c. 10.

in foreign parts." The enemies of Free Trade in those days had the courage of their opinions. They recognised that the disastrous mischiefs, which they set themselves to cure, were not to be removed by any mere measure of Tariff Reform. They knew that the imposition of heavy import duties, the marking of the offending goods as made in India, and the appeal to purchasers to support home industries were not likely to deter the ladies of that generation from buying and wearing the Eastern fabrics, which were becoming so fatally popular and fashionable. They determined therefore to go to the root of the matter, and prohibit altogether the importation and use of the offending draperies. Their ideal of a happy island seems to have been very much the same as that of Jeffreys, "Terra suis contenta bonis, non indiga mercis." It might be necessary to depart from this lofty ideal in some exceptional cases. For example, nobody wished to prohibit the import of gold and silver. On the contrary, it was the export of these imported articles that they objected to. And in this respect it appeared from more than one Parliamentary return that the East India merchants had been the most flagrant offenders. Nor would it have been safe to take objection to the import of saltpetre from the East. For without it the requisite supplies of gunpowder could not be provided for the unproductive Continental wars which had set in and promised to become permanent. Even the import of Eastern drugs and spices need not be stopped altogether, notwithstanding the excellences of our own indigenous herbs. But with clothing it was a very different matter. What good reason could there be for English men and women to depart from the time-honoured fashions of their ancestors? What could be better for them than English cloth

and wool, the reputation of which had stood so high in Europe for centuries? If the inhabitants of India declined to wear these staple textiles and would only buy them in strictly limited quantities for tents and curtains and horse furniture, why should the English wear Indian silks and calicoes and muslins? If English ladies must have silks, were not the products of the Spitalfields weavers good enough for them? By all means let merchants import the raw silk, and raw cotton too, for that matter, but let the line be drawn at fabrics. It was accordingly enacted that "no wrought silks, or bengals, or stuffs made of or mixed with silk or herba of the manufacture of Persia, China or the East Indies, or calicoes painted, dyed, printed or stained," should be brought into England, Wales or Berwick-upon-Tweed after the 30th of September 1701. If brought into the Port of London after that date, they were to be kept in special warehouses approved by the Commissioners of Customs, and not to be taken out of such warehouses except for exportation and until approved security had been given that they would be exported, and not landed again in any part of the Kingdom. As it would have been inconvenient for the Government to provide warehouses in every port, it was further enacted that if the prohibited goods were landed in any English port other than the Port of London, the importer should be liable to a penalty of £500, besides the forfeiture of the goods, and "if any of them were found in any house shop or warehouse or any other place whatsoever (than in one of the approved warehouses) whether they were mixed sewed or made up together for sale with any other goods or materials or otherwise," they were to be forfeited and were to be searched for and seized in like manner as other prohibited or customed

goods were ; and after condemnation sold for export at public sale by candle, the buyer to give security for their exportation. Over and above the loss of his goods, the owner was to forfeit £200. One-third of the money realised by their sale and the same proportion of the statutory penalty was to go to the King and the other two-thirds to the informer. The only case in which the Act was not to apply was where the prohibited goods had been made up or used in any sort of apparel or furniture before the 29th of September 1701.

To what extent this Act was enforced may be a question. But that it was far from being a dead letter may be inferred from the fact that some 20 years later another Act[1] was found necessary to prevent multiplicity of prosecutions under it. This later Act recited that "several persons had since the 29th of September 1701, inadvertently made up and used the prohibited goods in furniture and household stuff, believing that the earlier Act extended to apparel only, and had thereby subjected themselves to the penalties of the Act, for remedy whereof and preventing the numberless prosecutions that might happen from such inadvertency" it was enacted that "the said recited Act should not extend to any silks, bengals or stuffs mixed with silk or herba, or to painted, dyed printed or stained calicoes manufactured in Persia, China or the East Indies which were made up or used in furniture or household stuff before the 25th of December 1722."

This legislation, aimed as it undoubtedly was at the interests of both the East India Companies, has usually been regarded as one of the main causes that inclined them to come together. The Old Company made one last attempt in Parliament in the following year to get the better of its rival

[1] 10 Geo. I, c. 11.

in London as it had already done in India. Soon after the New Parliament had met in 1701 a Committee of the House of Commons had been appointed "to receive proposals for paying off the publick debt and advancing the credit of the Nation." The two millions advanced to the Government as a consideration for the monopoly of the Eastern trade, carried £8 per cent. interest. The Old Company now offered to take it over themselves, and charge only £5 per cent. for it[1]: a tempting offer which the Committee were inclined to take, but to which the House refused to assent, although the Company were willing to allow the public to subscribe to the two millions[2].

On the rejection of this proposal, the negotiations between the two Companies were resumed and an arrangement was ultimately arrived at, which seems to have given great satisfaction to both parties in London; but which, as might have been expected, was not equally popular in India either with the Old Company's officials, who had confidently hoped to see the trade of their rivals collapse after the ridiculous exhibition of the incompetence of the three King's Consuls, or with the servants of the New Company, who were impatiently expecting the Home Government to intervene on their behalf. The Agreement come to by their masters in England provided for the formation of an United Company, on the directorship of which each of the existing Companies was to have an equal representation of 12 members. The capital stock of the United Company was to consist of the two millions, advanced to the Government some years before, of which £1,662,000 had been subscribed by the New Company, £315,000 by the Old, and £23,000 by separate traders.

[1] *Journals of the House*, 10th May 1701. [2] Hunter 2. 363.

The proprietors of the Old Company were to repay to the proprietors of the New Company so much of the latter's subscription as would bring the subscriptions of the two Companies up to the same level[1]. The dead stock of the two Companies in India, *i.e.* their forts, factories and buildings as distinguished from their money, ships or merchandise, was to be taken over by the United Company at a valuation of £400,000, of which £330,000 was reckoned to be the value of the Old Company's, and £70,000 the value of the New Company's dead stock. The New Company were therefore to pay the Old Company £130,000, to equalise their contributions under this head. The Old Company were to convey to the United Company the Islands of St Helena and Bombay, but to retain the use of their house in Leadenhall Street and their warehouses in London for seven years, at the end of which time these were to be handed over to the United Company. In the meanwhile the two Companies were to hold their own Courts for their separate affairs and for paying their separate debts; but all debts contracted for the Joint Trade were to be paid out of the United Company's stock. The two Companies were as soon as practicable to bring home their separate estates, paying whatever dividends they might earn to their respective proprietors; and therefore neither Company was to send out ships, bullion or goods on their separate account. It is not easy to see on what better lines a scheme of amalgamation could have been brought about, in which it could have been reasonably expected that the proprietors of both Companies would acquiesce. Each gained much by it. The proprietors of the Old Company got a safe £8 per cent. from the Government for their contribution

[1] Bruce 3. 486–491.

to the United Stock. They had, it is true, to admit the proprietors of the New Company to an equal share of their profits. But this had been long recognised as inevitable, and as a *quid pro quo* for this concession they had a secured Parliamentary title to share with their rivals the monopoly of the Eastern trade. On the other hand, the proprietors of the New Company could now for the first time see their way to a commensurate share of the future yearly profits of that trade. The immediate result of the amalgamation was a very appreciable rise in the value of the stock of both Companies. Writing on the 1st of April 1702 to Governor Pitt, Sir Stephen Evans says: "Old Stock that was at £75 is upon the Union at £105, and the new risen proportionable[1]."

The first tidings of this arrangement that reached India seem to have been brought by the survivors of the crew of the New Company's ship, the *Norris*, which had sailed from the Downs on the 3rd of March 1702, and arrived on the 2nd of August in the Masulipatam Roads, where she blew up[2]. In a letter written to Sir John Gayer about a month later, Governor Pitt thus describes the lamentable catastrophe which befell this great ship, as ill-fated as the unfortunate ambassador from whom she took her name. "She arrived," he writes, "near Metchlepatam 2nd past when she mett with the misfortune of being sett on fire by a cask of brandy about 7 in the morning, and blew up about 4 in the afternoon, when was saved in the pinnace about 30 men and two women, the captain and about 90 men destroy'd in her, 130 chests of treasure lost, besides Cloth, Anchors, Guns &ca to a considerable amount, and nothing of the wreck can be since discovered[3]." The loss of this great vessel, so eagerly

[1] Hedges 3. 76.
[2] Bruce 3. 505.
[3] Hedges 3. 82.

expected and so urgently needed to discharge the debts and obligations which had been contracted on behalf of the New Company at Masulipatam, must have been a terrible blow to poor Consul John Pitt. It was while searching for her wreck that he died suddenly from an apoplectic fit on the 8th of May of the following year.

A month after the wreck of the *Norris* the news arrived at Fort St George of the death of William the Third and the accession of Queen Anne[1]. The ship by which it came probably brought some further particulars of the Union of the two Companies. The following is the entry in the Consultation Book of the 17th of September:

"In pursuance to an Order of Consultation, the Flag was early this morning hoisted, and at eight o'clock was lowered, when there was two volleys small shot and one hundred cannon discharged by the half minute glass, for the death of our late gracious King William the Third of blessed memory. Then the Flag was again hoisted up, when the Mayor and all the Aldermen in their gowns on horseback, with twelve Halberteers and a Company of Grenadiers marching before them, Proclaimed our gracious Queen Anne at the Fort Gate, Town Hall, Sea Gate and Choultry Gate, with many huzzas and great demonstrations of joy, with three volleys small shot, and one hundred and one pieces of cannon discharged. And in the evening the Governor, attended by all the Gentlemen of the Council, with the Mayor and Aldermen and several other gentlemen, in palanquins and horseback, to the Company's Bowling Green, where there was a handsome treat provided; all Europeans of fashion in the city being invited to the same, where they drank the Queen's health, and prosperity to old England, with many others."

A few weeks later the Governor wrote the following letter to the Directors of the New Company, from which it is clear that he had by that time received some official intimation of the Union of the two Companies:

[1] Wheeler 2. 11.

"To the Honble The Directors for affairs of the English East India Company.

Dated Fort St. George October the 3rd. 1702.

Srs

Whereas my gratitude as an Englishman obliges me to pay all Defference to the Blessed Memory of King William, so allso on this occasion I can't butt remember that Great Saying of his to the French Kings Plenipotentiarys at Ryswick, upon concluding the Peace, which furnishes mee with apt words for this address to You.

'Twas my Fate and nott my choice that made mee Your Enemy, and Since You and My Masters are united, Itt shall bee my utmost Endeavours to purchase Your Good Opinion and deserve Your Friendship.

The bearer is my Son, whom I recommend to Your favour, as You shall find him meritt the Same. My service to you all.

I am, Srs,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Tho. Pitt[1]."

This letter was in due course brought home to England by Robert Pitt together with the great Pitt diamond. It is characteristic of the writer, who throughout his career never failed to serve his employers, whoever they might be, faithfully and to the best of his great ability. It is unlikely that when it was penned he was aware of the arrangements which had been made by his new masters for the management of their affairs in India. Sir Stephen Evans, in detailing them in his letter of the 1st of August in that year, speaks of them as having been then only just decided upon. The Governor probably felt tolerably secure of his own position. For of all the English officials then in India, he had done by far the most signal service to the English trade, and he was not the man to under-estimate the value of his own work, which he knew was fully recognised by his friend Sir Thomas

[1] Bruce 3. 305 Hedges 3. 79.

Cook, the Chairman of the United Company. When in due course he learnt what the actual arrangements were that had been made by the United Company with respect to himself and his colleagues, they were very far from affording him unmixed gratification. At the same time he must have realised some of the main inherent difficulties of the situation in which that Company had found themselves. Difficult as it had been to make a satisfactory rearrangement of the finances of the Old and New Companies, that was a simple business compared with what had next to be faced, the establishment of a workable system for the transaction of the United Company's affairs in India, and an efficient staff for the working of that system, which should comprise all the existing officers of the two superseded Companies, without unduly favouring those who had been on one side or the other during the recent conflicts. This would have been no easy task for an unbiased tribunal, and amongst the directors of the United Company it would have been difficult to find one man who was not very strongly biased, and who did not cherish more or less lively memories of the recent injuries which had been done to his Company by one half of the men on whose merits he had now to record his opinion. The three Presidents of the New Company had been utter failures, and it was inevitable that they should be deprived of their Consular powers, which ought never to have been given them, and which had created so much offence in India. But to supersede them by promoting to their places the men who had done their best to bring their failures about must have been very repugnant to the representatives of the New Company.

Ultimately a majority of the Directors seem to have come to the conclusion that the best course

to take was to place the least deserving in more or less dignified positions, where it was hoped they could not do very much harm, and to offer the more successful ones the minimum concessions that were likely to induce them to remain in their present posts. In the meanwhile they were all exhorted to sink their differences; to let bygones be bygones; and to work harmoniously together, an exhortation to which most of them were likely to attach as much importance as they were wont to concede to the homilies addressed to them once a week from the pulpit.

In Madras Governor Pitt was appointed Governor and President of Fort St George; but his cousin John Pitt was made Governor of Fort St David, with an independent power in civil and military affairs, and the promise that he should succeed to the Governorship of Fort St George on the death or retirement of the present Governor[1]. In the meanwhile he was to be subordinate to Governor Pitt and his Council in all matters regarding trade and investments, in which his incapacity had been lately so clearly demonstrated. It appears from a letter to the Governor from Sir Stephen Evans that an attempt had been made by the directors, who represented the New Company, to place the two kinsmen on an equality[2]. "There arose," he writes, "a discourse, when the Old and New Company Cheifs mett how they should sitt, particularly as to yourself, the New proposed Mr. Jno Pitt should come up and wait on you at Fort St George, and that you should take the Chair one day and Mr. Jno Pitt the next, but it was at last agreed that Hee should sitt at your left hand, the Old Court was very hearty to Your Interest, and most of the New spoke with great respect of you." Though

[1] Bruce 3. 497.

[2] Hedges 3. 76.

they may have done so, it is clear from their subsequent conduct that some of them cherished a deep-rooted antipathy to Governor Pitt, and only waited for an opportunity to do him as much injury as they could. The two kinsmen never sat together in Council. For John Pitt died before the news of his fresh appointment reached Madras. "Had he lived," his cousin wrote to Captain Edward Harrison the next year, "there would have been strange Rotation work between him and me, for 'twas impossible wee could ever be reconciled, for I think him the ungratefullest wretch that ever was borne. He is dead and there is an end of it."

In Bombay Governor Pitt's colleagues fared far worse than he did. It was decided that Sir John Gayer, who was at this time a prisoner in Surat in the hands of the Mogul Governor, should, when released from his confinement, take up his quarters in the fortress of Bombay, which he ought never to have quitted; and that he should become Governor of the Presidency with Waite as his subordinate at Surat. In the meanwhile Waite was ordered to spare no pains to induce the Mogul's Governor to set Gayer free, and until this was effected he was to act temporarily as Governor of the Presidency. Waite's character was so notorious that it is difficult to believe that some at any rate of the directors of the Company who supported this arrangement were not aware of what would be the probable result of these infatuated orders, the carrying out of which would have imposed some strain upon the honesty of far more scrupulous men than Waite. The consequences to poor Gayer were very serious. Waite had no mind to become a subordinate to his late rival; and it is said that he not only refrained from informing the native Governor that the latter was now the chosen Chief

of the United Company in that Province, but went so far as to pay him a heavy bribe for the purpose of keeping Gayer under lock and key[1]. He then "continued for six more years his carnival of misrule outraging even the lax public opinion of the English community of Surat by an incestuous marriage with his niece, though his own wife was still living in England." It was not until 1708 that orders came from England for his dismissal. But before they reached India his own Council had been compelled to place him under restraint. Nobody who has tried to read through any of his rambling, incoherent letters to the Court can help feeling some doubt as to his sanity. That the United Company should have permitted him to retain office so long as President of Bombay is inexplicable, except on the supposition that they were divided in opinion, that his supporters at home believed him to be a stronger man than Gayer, and that he persistently kept back from the Company any adverse reports that his officials might have desired to send to England. That he ruled the latter with a rod of iron is indisputable. His brutality was such that they did not dare to oppose him, and no one from any of the other Presidencies was willing to serve under him. The Court offered the post of Deputy Governor of Surat to one of Governor Pitt's Council, a Mr Brabourne, who declined to accept it. Writing to the Court in September 1706 with reference to this offer, Governor Pitt says[2]: "If yourselves did hear what Character in this place there is given of Bombay, and the Person that is at the head of your Affairs there, you wou'd not blame his (*i.e.* Brabourne's) refusal, for I have heard severall say that they had rather

[1] Hunter 2. 374; Bruce 3. 564, 565.
[2] Hedges 2. 147.

be a private Centenell in Fort St George than to serve as Second under Sr Nicholas; and if itt be true, what all say that come thence, I can make no other judgment (I wish I may be mistaken) then that he'll ruine all, and yett I hear he's the New Company's Saint, and such may they always have." Gayer did not obtain his release until 1710. Even then his ill-luck clung to him. The ship in which he was returning home was attacked by four French ships of war off Cape Comorin, and surrendered after a desperate resistance, in which he was wounded. He died of his wounds, a prisoner in the hands of the French.

The Court of the United Company were equally divided on the question whether Littleton or Beard should be the New President for Bengal; and the appointment was therefore deferred for a year[1], during which interval it was decided that the business of the United Trade should be carried on by a Committee, composed of the four senior members of the Councils of the New and Old Companies, of which the first member of each was to take the chair in alternate weeks; Beard and Littleton in the meanwhile directing their attention solely to the winding up of the separate affairs of their respective Companies. They and the two Councils were all to take up their quarters at Chuttannuttee, it being at last recognised at home that the Company's servants would be safer there under the protection of the guns of Fort William than they would be at Hugli. The Rotation Government does not seem to have been a success. Writing to the Secretary at the East India House in December 1704, Governor Pitt says of it: "'Tis become the ridicule of India, both Europeans and natives[2]." And again in another letter to a friend: "In Bengall all things are pretty

[1] Bruce 3. 500.

[2] Hedges 2. 106.

quiet, only jangling in the Rotation Government all talkers and no hearers." The absurdity of delegating the conduct of the Company's affairs in Bengal to eight talkative gentlemen, each of whose object was to convince the others that he was right and they were wrong, could have appealed to no man more strongly than to the masterful Governor Pitt, whose experiences as a sea captain and President of Madras must have convinced him of the absolute necessity of an undivided control.

Neither Beard nor Littleton lived to return to England. Beard, who had been Pitt's faithful coadjutor in the contest between the two Companies, and who deserved a better fate, died in September 1705 at Fort St George, whither he had retired for the benefit of his failing health[1]. Littleton lived on at Fort William, where he died some two years later, in discreditable circumstances, heavily in debt to the New Company[2]. He had been an old friend of Governor Pitt, in whose early days he had been Chief of the Kasimbazar factory, a post from which he had been dismissed in consequence of his dealings with interlopers. Pitt seems to the end to have had a kindly feeling towards him. After his dismissal by the Old Company Littleton had remained in England, until by means of his family influence in Parliament he was appointed by the New Company their President in Bengal. Before leaving England he narrowly escaped being discharged by his new masters, owing to his remaining longer than he need have done in the Downs. He seems to have been a very bad man of business; and his accounts soon got into inextricable confusion on his arrival in Bengal. He was accused by the New Company of malversation, and of using their moneys and credit for the

[1] Hedges 2. 106. [2] Hedges 2. 221.

purposes of his private trade. Whether he did so or not, his private adventures were not successful. Nobody seems to have been able to get money out of him. He occupied at Hugli a house belonging to Governor Pitt, who complains that he paid him no rent for it, although 1600 rupees had lately been expended on its repairs[1]. Writing to him in November 1702, after the Union of the two Companies, Pitt says[2]:

"You call me your Antient ffriend, but you are kinder to any new one, for is it not hard that you don't allow me some thing towards the extraordinary repairs I gave your house, which amount I am sure was between 16 and 1800 rupees, or you had found it flatt Smooth? I always esteem'd you a man of Conscience, pray retaine a little of it for me, and think of this matter....'Tis strange that you Don't know the Governor and Fort William, having been soe great a thorne in your side, I hear your Copper is detain'd for Outrages you have committed, and infringing the Liberty and property of the Honble John Beard Esqr, and rather than you'de want a billiard table, 'tis said you have seiz'd another man's house to set it up in. I hope the matter is compos'd and that by this time you are in quiet possession of your Copper.

I want 3 or 4 hours discourse with you to set you right in your old honest principles till when I conclude this, and am

Sr,

Your antient ffriend and humble servant,

Thos. Pitt."

The two old friends never seem to have met again. Their friendship is noteworthy, in view of the great intimacy between their two families in after years.

The resentment of the Governor towards the memory of his cousin John Pitt, who had also been an old friend of his in earlier days, is a striking contrast to the kindly recollection which he seems to have entertained of Littleton. It illustrates a less amiable side of his character. His animosity

[1] Hedges 3. 63.

[2] Hedges 3. 80.

was in no way abated by his unfortunate kinsman's death. Writing some months afterwards to one who had been a friend to them both, he says[1]:

"I having said before that the differences between my Couzen Pitt and Selfe were irreconcileable, may be t'would seem odd, if I gave you noe reasons for the same. My Couzen Pitt when I came to India in the Crown" (*i.e.* in his first very successful interloping expedition to rescue Vincent), "I found him in a deplorable condition, cast wholy off by his Uncle George, who had Supported him from his infancy, with whome I interceded to reinstate him in his favour, but found 'twas to noe purpose. I then advis'd him to come out to India, and not only Supply'd him with money for his outset, but likewise an adventure, whereby he appeared handsomely abroad, and from that time Supply'd him in such a manner as I may say without vanity I was, under God, his only Support, yet you see in what manner he came into this Road, what an Impudent Letter he sent me, and many others since, which I still keep by me, and permitted his wife to treat me at his table with the worst of Language, thô he at the same time would be drinking my health; and giving his Service, if there was anybody present that was coming hither; and when he came out first he wrote me that he was Godfather to my Son borne after my departure, on whome in case of failure of Issue male he had Settl'd what he had in the world, and I had done the same by him at my comeing out of England....'Tis not my busyness to Censure the management of my kinsman, who was very great and wise in his own thoughts, but this I'le write to you, that there are no generall books kept, noe consultations, and I believe your Company indebted at Metchlepatam a farr greater Sum than they think of....The Woman some time after her husband's death desir'd to remove his Corps hither, and that I would complement him, as he had bore the King's Commission, which I refus'd, upon account that he did not Salute the King's fflagg when he came into this Road. The copies of her and my letter I here enclose. She came hither the latter end of August without taking any notice of me or I of her."

In another letter to his cousin Thomas Pitt, a Master in Chancery, he wrote[2]:

"I doubt not but you'le have heard of the death of our good Kindred Mr. Jno Pitt, which was in May last, who thought him

[1] Hedges 3. 86. [2] Hedges 3. 87.

Selfe noe less than a Roman Consul, which made him grow soe proud and Soe ungrateful as not to be parallel'd. I had Reason to expect to have found a ffriend in him, but it prov'd otherwise, yet never in his power to doe me any prejudice, tho he has not been wanting to attempt it....

I should have been very glad to have heard how it was with Cozen George Pitt, and that part of our ffamily, for that I hear 'twas a common saying by the deceased Jno and his Lady that they did not doubt but to live to have the possession of Strathfield Sea, but She says now all her hopes are for her son, who if he be noe better than the ffather, 'tis not great matter, if there be ever any more of the breed of him."

To another cousin he writes[1]:

"Preferment had most strangely altered him and made him forget his greatest obligations. He acquainted all people that he and I was allways upon equall termes, and that I never did him any kindness. He was Soe ignorant as to phancy that his diminutive title of Consul made him equall to the Governor of Ffort St. George, but he found it otherwise. I doubt not but you'le have a great Complaint about my denying his Corps buryall here with the Complement as his Wife desir'd, the Reason of which was the manner of his comeing in this Road without paying any Respect to the King's fflagg. His Wife came here in August last, who thought it not worth her While to take any notice of me, nor I of her, Soe that I have never seen her. 'Tis very unhappy that these differences should be between relations, but I appeal to all mankind, who has been the egressor."

In reading these letters it is only fair to bear in mind that they were written whilst the Governor was still smarting from the effects of his recent conflict with his cousin and for the purpose of explaining to his relations the part he had taken in it. A few years later (27th September 1707), in writing home to his friend Dolben, he says[2]: "I own 'tis my failing to be angry, but not revengefull. I never did my kinsman, his widow or children any prejudice, and whenever any of their affaires have been discours'd before me, I alsoe chose Rather to be Neutre then Judge or party and shall ever

[1] Hedges 3. 88.

[2] Hedges 3. 108.

doe soe." And in 1720, as Sir Henry Yule has pointed out[1], he allowed the son of Consul John Pitt to be elected as his colleague as member of Parliament for Old Sarum, a very tangible proof that he had no inclination to visit the sins of the father upon his child. The son of his old enemy whom he thus befriended, and who had been born at Fort St George, became its Governor in 1730[2].

[1] Hedges 3. 149.
[2] Mrs Frank Penny's *History of Fort St George*, p. 151.

# CHAPTER XVI

## THE GREAT DIAMOND IN ENGLAND

GOVERNOR PITT'S anxieties about his great diamond seem to have increased rather than diminished after it had passed out of his own keeping into that of his son, of whose manifold shortcomings and weaknesses he must have been only too painfully aware. Within a week after the *Loyal Cooke* had sailed for England he wrote the following letter to Robert[1]:

"1702. October 15. Fort St George.

I received no letter from you after you got aboard. I hope you will not be so forgetful of my instructions, and the good advice I have often given you. I hope this will meet you arrived safe at St. Helena, or in England, with what I have committed to your charge, which I hope will be well disposed of by you and those I have conjoined with you. The true value I must never expect; but I hope you will never part with it for much less. I gave you an account how to estimate the value, which I hope you are master of.

It is no small charge that I have entrusted you with, being the management of all my affairs: so that it requires your utmost care and industry to discharge it to my likeing. Be sure not to let slip any opportunity of writing. My credit as well as interest depends very much on your prudent management of yourself. If any should be inquisitive (I mean Sir Stephen or Mr. Alvarez) what that cost, you may tell them about 130,000 pagodas. If the thing be kept secret, and well managed, it must yield an immense sum of money......Avoid all vices, and an inconvenient or disreputable marriage."

There are two points that call for explanation in this letter. The directions for estimating the

[1] Dropmore I. 5.

value of the stone, with which Pitt hopes that his son is familiar, were no doubt taken from Tavernier[1], who estimates that a diamond properly cut and weighing 1 carat, if of uniform water, lively and without a flaw, is worth 150 livres or more (£11. 5*s.*) and that in order to ascertain the value of any larger diamond the number of carats which it weighs should be squared, and then multiplied by the value of a 1 carat diamond. The first example which he gives of the application of this rule is a 12 carat diamond, the value of which, if of first class quality, he estimates at 12 × 12 × £11. 5*s.* = £1620. The Great Mogul diamond, of which he gives a full description and illustration, weighed, he tells us, "$279\frac{9}{16}$ carats, was of perfect water and good form and had only one small flaw in the edge of the basal circumference of the stone." By the above system of calculation he estimated its value at £879,245. Governor Pitt was evidently in hopes that his own diamond, when cut into a brilliant, would be as good as, if not better than, the Mogul diamond. In its rough state it weighed, as he had already told Sir Stephen Evans, 426 carats, and he believed that it would not lose more than one-fourth in the cutting. Had he been right in this opinion, it would have been in its finished state a larger stone than the Great Mogul. But he seems not to have taken sufficiently into account in his calculations the fact that the Great Mogul, according to Tavernier, had in its rough state weighed 793 carats; and that if his diamond were to lose an equally large proportion of its weight in the process of becoming a brilliant, it would end by being considerably smaller than the Great Mogul.

The second point is the reference in the letter to Sir Stephen Evans and Mr Alvarez (Alvares

[1] Tavernier 2. 95–98.

or Alvaro Da Foncesca). Evans, as has already been mentioned, was to be Robert Pitt's colleague in the management of the Governor's affairs at home. But in dealing with the diamond, the Governor was desirous that Da Foncesca should be associated with them, who was apparently an expert in the diamond trade, having been a free merchant at Fort St George. The terms on which the two men stood with each other may be gathered from a letter to the Governor from Da Foncesca, dated the 21st of November of the previous year, of which the following is an extract:

"I cannot omitt Reflecting now and then on those merry hours I use to spend with your Honour and the Rest of our friends in the Company's Garden, where wee could injoy our Bottle without being disturbed with these Frightfull Rumors of Warr, as here wee are every day[1]."

As a matter of fact, the Governor seems to have had greater confidence in the judgment of Da Foncesca than in that of Evans in the matter of diamonds, notwithstanding the fact that the latter was the Court Jeweller. But it is clear from his letter to Robert that he wished both men to be misled as to the price which he had paid for the diamond, and that they should believe that he had given 130,000 pagodas for it, whereas as a matter of fact he had only given 48,000.

In explanation of this, it should be borne in mind that the success of the diamond trade carried on by the Governor and his colleagues at Fort St George depended to a great extent on keeping the natives in India in ignorance of the prices which the stones fetched in England, and on the maintenance of secrecy in England as to the prices at which they had been bought in India. As a matter of fact, as has already been seen[2], as soon as the native

[1] Hedges 3. 70. [2] See p. 236.

merchants had learnt from Pluymer the prices paid for their diamonds in London, they demanded so much for them as seriously to diminish the profits of the trade. Nor can there be any doubt that the disclosure in London of the prices paid for the diamonds in India would have diminished their selling value in London.

On the 27th of January 1703 Governor Pitt wrote to Da Foncesca[1]:

"The Consignment I made Sr Stephen Evance, Your Selfe and My Son I hope came Safe to your hands, and that 'twill answer in goodness to the full as I represented it, the Satisfaction I have of your abilities, as well as integrity in Such matters gives me great hope 'twill answer my expectations, 'tis most Certain there is not the fellow of it in the world, there has been Some Smattering of it in the Countrey, for which Severall were sent for up to the King, who I hear of late are come off with Impunity but great Charge. The King of Ffrance or Spaine will in all probability be the likelyest Chapmen for it, unless our Parliament, upon good success in some noble undertaking, will be Soe Generous as to buy it for the Crown of England. I have left it to your discretion whether you'll make a Single or two Stones of it, but remember don't part with it without its full value, which must be very Considerable, Computing it as those of an inferior magnitude are sold."

The next day he wrote the following letter to Evans, Da Foncesca and his son[2]:

"1702–3. January 28. Fort St. George.

I have lately for my diversion been perusing Taverneir, whose method of calculating the value of great stones I observe; and if what I sent you, being made a single stone and when cut will weigh about 300 carats, according to his calculation, it would be worth £800,000. How that calculation will hold in the present time I am to seek, and therefore depend upon your knowledge and integrity.

We are informed here that it is a war: God grant this concern may escape the danger thereof. I believe, whenever peace comes, the King of France or Spain will be the fairest chapman for it, being the greatest jewell in the world: though

[1] Hedges 3. 127. [2] Dropmore 1. 6.

I could wish it were purchased for the Crown of England, provided they will come up to the value of it.

Since it went hence there has been some smattering of it in the country as having been seen in the mines ; and several eminent persons there about have been sent for by the King, and been put to great charge and trouble, but have at last returned in a whole skin.

I doubt not you will take care that it be lodged in a secure place and if the times will not admit of your selling it at its full value, I hope you will be very cautious of letting it go out of your own possession. I am thinking of many things relating to this matter, but having entrusted it to men of honour and judgment, shall leave it entirely at your disposal.

Since writeing the above, Abendana" (a well-known native diamond merchant) "is come hither with his family, who by his discourse I find hee has heard something of the businesse in the mines, butt knows nothing of my having bought it. You may bee sure I think dayly of this matter, and upon often meditating thereon, I am of opinion that it bee kept in tire, and if you thinke fitt to cutt it, I believe it will come out a cleane stone of about three hundred caratts, which I hope may bee worth, att least fifteene hundred pounds per caratt. It must be sold directly to some great prince and not to a club of people that shall make more advantage of it than myselfe, who have run the greatest of risgoes to purchase it. The foregoing is my opinion, but noe order to you, being well satisfy'd in your worth, and assured you will doe for mee as for yourselves."

A week afterwards he wrote to Evans the following letter[1] :

"ffeby the 3rd 1703.

"I hope my Concerne on the Loyall Cooke will come safe to your hand, and doubt not but you'le doe all you can to Contribute to the well disposall thereof, 'tis a very good Water, ffree from all foules and noe fflaws but what will be worked out, and the Shape is not bad, and upon the best enquiry I can make, 'tis certainly the finest Jewell in the World, and worth an immense Sum, and I hope you'le never part with it but for its reall value, which it may be you'le not be able to get dureing the Warr, to which God send a happy and Speedy conclusion, when I doubt not but you'le have Chapmen enough for it, for Princes generally covet Such Jewells as cannot be parallel'd, and I am sure that cannot, for its excellency and magnitude, and 'tis my opinion 'tis best to keep it one Stone, which I leave wholy to you and the rest consign'd to."

[1] Hedges 3. 127.

Seven days later he wrote to Evans and his son jointly:

"ffeby 10th 1703.

"I hope my Son will be Safe arriv'd, and that that great Concern of mine will come safe to your hands, which I doubt not but you'le dispose of to my most advantage, or lett it lye bye till you are offer'd the full value thereof.

Tis my opinion to Continue it a Single Stone, which I am sure is not to be parrellel'd in the world, which must certainly be coveted by the richest of Princes when 'tis a peace, and by the Calculate I make when I am by my Selfe, Computeing it as large Stones have been sold, and this in proportion to 'em, when 'tis Cutt, it must be worth £1500 a Caret if not more. I would never have it trusted out of your hands upon noe account whatever, and if you are in treaty with any fforreign Prince about it, I believe my Son may be a proper Person to send with the Modell or what directions you Shall think fitt, but take care he receives no money on that account in a fforeign Countrey for fear they Strip him of it before he gets out of it."

These letters following, as they do, so closely one on the top of the other show how persistently at this time the Governor's mind dwelt on thoughts of the future fate of his beloved jewel, and help us to sympathise with him in the nervous suspense with which he must have awaited the news of its safe arrival in England. His restless fears on its behalf cannot but have been intensified by the rumours that were beginning to reach India of the loss of the *Bedford*, which was carrying home for him a diamond second only in value to that of which he wrote. On the 19th of September of that year, in a letter to his friend Sir John Fleet, he says[1]: "I am extremely concern'd at the ill news wrote us from the Cape and Mauritius of the Bedford, but trust in God 'tis not true: hope that she gott about the Cape or Winter'd at St. Laurence" (Madagascar), "for that Ship's Cargoe is the flower of our good services, which would leave the greatest

[1] Hedges 3. 82.

impression upon me immagineable should she doe otherwise then well, nor can I rest within my Selfe till I hear she is soe."

In his parting instructions he had urged his son to write to him by all conveyances whatever, overland, Surat, or any other way, that is to say, on every occasion on which it was possible to send letters from England to India. But Robert had other things to do besides attending to his father's wishes. Very shortly after reaching London he had become engaged to Harriet Villiers, the sister of the Earl of Grandison; and he seems to have informed his father of the engagement in a letter dated the 27th of May 1703. In this letter he can hardly have failed to mention the safe arrival of the diamond in London. But he seems to have given very scanty details about it or any other of his father's affairs until the 30th of December in that year, when he wrote[1]:

"I can now give you full tidings of the safety of your great concern here in England." "I hope that something will be done in your grand affair by next Spring and that I shall be able to have a crystal model made of it in its true polite shape, by showing which as a thing that might possibly be found, and by consulting Amsterdam Jews, some insight might be obtained as to the real value. The King of Prussia, if able, is the likeliest chapman at present; though, were peace made, the King of France would certainly be the man. Mr. Cope has the cutting of it. Our present design is a single stone and we hope to make it a brilliant. It proves the first water, but will be diminished almost one half in cutting. We have so managed it that what is cut off is in great pieces, and will sell for a good sum of money. Mr. Cope says that when finished, it will weigh about 280 carets, and will be the wonder of the world. We found means to enter it safely through the customs and go on briskly perfecting it for sale. When you write, it were better for fear of the miscarriage of a letter, to say little about it, and what you do say, to have a key to; by which means none but ourselves will understand it. On coming near England I thought it not safe

[1] Dropmore I. 8.

to keep it as you delivered it to me; and for better security let Captain Boulton into the secret. We secured it, I think, so effectually, that had we been taken, we had preserved it. I presented him with a large silver punch bowl to the value of thirty-odd pounds on your account, which for his fidelity ever since in the matter, he deserved."

What precautions had been taken for preserving the stone, in the event of the *Loyal Cooke* being captured by French privateers in the Channel, are not stated. The tradition seems to be that it left India concealed in the heel of Robert's shoe[1]. Probably Captain Boulton had found some safer hiding place for it. By what means it was entered safely through the customs can only be conjectured. That customs duty was paid in respect of it seems clear from a letter from the Governor to Sir Stephen Evans in the following September. It would have been interesting to know what was the estimated value of the diamond for the purposes of this duty. Streeter, in *The Great Diamonds of the World*, says that it was charged in the original bill of lading at 6500 pagodas only, and sent home in the *Bedford* (Captain John Hudson); but the bill of lading to which he refers evidently relates to the smaller diamond, which, as already mentioned, the Governor had sent home by the *Bedford* and which was lost at sea.

The reassuring news of the safety of the diamond must have been to some extent discounted by the concluding paragraphs of Robert Pitt's letter, which were as follows:

"Your affairs have been in all respects mismanaged, and we hope by the next ships to give you a particular account of them."

"You always advised me against a disreputable marriage, which I have avoided by marrying a lady of family and character, with the approval of my mother and of uncle Curgenven. Her fortune is but £2000, and £1000 more after the death of her

[1] Rosebery I. 8.

father in law, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart. I hope I shall not be abandoned by you at a time when I have no other support but yourself, since my alliance with the greatest families in England is as much to your credit, as my wife will be a comfort to you when you know her. My present happiness is altogether due to you, as it was the universal report of your good and generous character that induced Lady Grandison to give me her daughter. Her age is 21, her portrait and letter herewith speak for themselves; and I hope to obtain some genteel employment by the intercession of her relatives."

If Robert hoped by this diplomatic account of his marriage to appease his father's resentment at his delay in writing to him and his neglect to give him full information of his affairs and family, he must have been woefully disappointed. He should have written earlier. The news of his marriage had already reached India from an unfriendly source. Writing to Captain Edward Harrison in China in April 1704, the Governor says[1]:

"Yours of the 21st May I received via Anjengo the 8th instant. I heartily thank you for it, and all the news contain'd therein unless it be that part relating to my disobedient Son, who has not follow'd any one direction or order of mine, or had any regard to the advice I gave him before he parted with me. His Sudden Captivation must certainly have render'd him a light and inconsiderate fellow in the eyes of all men of busyness and thought.

The Lady I'me a Stranger to, and I believe shall allways be Soe, if her Character answers what you write, I wish she have not the worst of it, thô with her fortune and what he has of his own, with the advantages I have given him in his Education are very good working tools, and all that he must ever expect from me, thô he him Selfe not only Sets a value upon the Lady and her fortune but also upon the interest of the ffamily which I have little regard to, since that I can remember I never heard you say that you had any advantage thereby.

You write me that you had noe hand in this matter, therefore I am oblidg'd to Credit it, yet I wish you had given him ffriendly advice to have desisted from soe foolish and Suddaine an undertaking. I have received a letter from him which gives me little or noe satisfaction in my own busyness, nor does

[1] Hedges 3. 93.

he mention so much when he arriv'd at Milford Haven or London, or has a Brother or Sister, or had deliver'd a Letter of mine sent by him."

In his reply to Robert himself, he says[1]:

"In your letter of the 27th of May you say there is a match on foot between you and the lady mentioned. I believe you play the same game with me as with your mother, who writes me you were married before she saw your wife; and I believe you were so before you wrote to me, for several correspondents tell me that was the first thing you did, which has justly brought you under the character of a giddy and inconsiderate young fellow. I guess the cause of your writing so slender an account of my affairs, and taking no notice of brother or sister, friend or relation; nor do you mention anything in regard to the delivery of many letters I sent by you.

As to your marriage, what I chiefly dislike is its suddenness; and much wonder you desire a present enlargement of your fortune, which with your wife's cannot be much less than £10,000; a very good fortune for a young man qualified for business. I hope the great interest you value yourself on, will procure you some considerable employ."

This reply was accompanied by a peremptory demand, addressed to Evans and Robert jointly that "my son, Robert Pitt, is to make good to my cash 300 dollars paid to discharge his bill from the Cape; also £1000, which his mother gave him" (presumably as a wedding present), "she not having power to dispose of a penny of mine, nor ever shall."

It is not unlikely that this uncompromising mandate may have led Lady Grandison to modify the favourable opinion which, according to Robert, she had formed "of the good and generous character" of his father.

But to return to the diamond.

The same ship that brought to Fort St George Robert Pitt's announcement of his marriage seems also to have carried the refusal of Da Foncesca to accept any responsibility in the care and disposal of the stone[2]. In writing back to Evans, the Governor

[1] Dropmore I. I.

[2] Hedges 3. 129.

says: "Tis not a little unkind that Mr. Alvares refuses me his assistance in the matter, for which I wish I knew his reasons, for what trouble can accrew since you have enter'd it and paid the Customs, and I thanke you for the care you resolve to take of it, and I take notice what progress you have made in it, and the prospect you have of its being most excellent, of which I assure you there is not the fellow in the world at present. Of this I have wrote fully in my letter to you and my Sone which I desire you'le observe."

The following is an extract from the letter here referred to[1]:

"Twas Well come news to hear of the Safe arrivall of that Concerne of mine, and observe the progress you have made in Cutting it, of which you should have wrote me fully in your joynt Letter, of which there is a smattering thereof in both your particular; 'tis very fortunate that it proves soe good, and 'tis my desire that it be made one Brillion which I would not have sold (unless it be for a trifle) less than fifteen hundred pounds a carrat, tho by all computations that I can make from Presidents of that nature, 'tis worth much more. 'Tis my whole dependance, and therefore it must be Sold to the best advantage, for which reason I have trusted it in the hands of a ffriend and a Sone, whose care I doubt not, but will likewise preserve it from Any accident of ffire or any other event, and I approve of your locking it up, and defer the Sale till after the Warr."

Some months afterwards he was somewhat disappointed at hearing that the pieces up to that time cut off the diamond had produced only £1500, and wrote to Evans and Robert jointly on the 5th of February 1705[2]:

"You wrote that the Peices Saw'd off will yeild about £1500, which I hope was a mistake, and that there was a Cypher wanted to make it thousands, for certainly the peices must be extraordinarily well spread, which makes it most valuable, and those that judge of it here by the modell make it very considerable. But of that I doubt not but you'le take care that he that cuts

[1] Hedges 3. 128

[2] Hedges 3. 129.

it do's not abuse me. Let it be Kept a Secret, and not any one person whatever to see it, unless it be to the advantage of the Sale of it. My Wife, Mr. Yale, and Capt Harrison have given me hints of it, but I have wrote 'em there is noe such thing. Here has been and is at this time great inquiry after it by orders from the King. The greatest man that had a hand in the Sale is dead, and another is sent up for him; how he'll come off I dont know, therefore it as much imports me to have it a secret in England as here, for Reasons I shall give you when I see you."

That the secret had long ago been divulged in many quarters in England appears from a letter, which Robert had written to him a year before[1], in which the following passage occurs: "Intelligence of your great concern was certainly divulged before I came home by some person you let into the secret. The minute I arrived it was said I brought it. The same person has said he was sure you would not have let me come home, unless it was to bring that. There was a great bustle at first, but now it is safely entered, and all is hush." It would also seem from the above letter from the Governor himself that he had been consulting some persons at Fort St George to whom he had shown the model of it.

About this time he wrote to Da Foncesca again entreating him to give his assistance and advice. "I doe," he says, "most earnestly reiterate my former request to you for your care in that grand Concerne of mine the good success of which Crowns all my labours, which have been not a little fateaguing insoemuch that a little ease and retirement is very desirable by me, therefore pray as a ffriend give your advice and assistance in that great matter, and direct my Sone how he shall act in it[2]."

Before this letter can have reached England his son had written to him on the 18th of December 1704:

[1] Dropmore 1. 9. [2] Hedges 3. 129.

"The cutting of your grand concern licks off a world of money, and I hope that by the next ships you will have made us some remittances, else it will be very bare with us. I also hope that the pieces that will be cut off will greatly help to defray the charge. We have lately sold three for £2000, and anticipate that those to come off will fetch as good a sum. The sawing them off is a vast charge: but otherwise they must have been cut into powder so what they produce above the charge is clear gain. I hope that when you arrive you will find it finished, and the finest brilliant in the world. The only defect I fear is the want of a chapman, while the war lasts; but the victories of the Duke of Marlborough, last summer, give hopes of a speedy peace[1]."

The next news which the Governor received of his grand concern must have been a cruel blow to his fondest expectations. He had confidently hoped that when completely cut it would turn out a larger brilliant than the Great Mogul, which weighed rather less than 280 carats. He had estimated that it would "come out a cleane stone of about 300 carats," and had been told that Cope had thought it would weigh when finished about 280 carats. The price realised for the pieces cut off probably confirmed the Governor in his opinion that his was the truer estimate of the two. At £1500 a carat, he might reasonably expect £450,000 for the stone, if his estimate was correct, and £420,000 if Cope was right. We may be sure that in the frequent meditations in which he indulged, these figures were strongly impressed on his mind, and now the curt announcement came to him, apparently on a slip of paper, that his famous jewel would only weigh one-half of Cope's estimate.

He at once wrote off to Cope[2]:

"1705 (October 15) Fort St. George. Sir Stephen Evance and my son advised me that you would write me an account of a concern of mine which has been under your direction and management for the cutting of it, but all the account I received

[1] Dropmore I. 12.

[2] Dropmore I. 15.

was a slip of paper, which very much surprises me. My son, by your direction, wrote to me in January 1703, when you had the stone in your hands about eight months, and, as I suppose, begun to work it, that it would make a clean stone, a brilliant of 280 carats and the pieces sawed off worth a great sum. Now you tell me it will be but 140 carats, and the pieces worth little that are sawed off. Certainly Mr. Cope's judgment cannot fairly vary so much, there being a window in the crown of the stone when (it) went hence, and the body very clear, when the skilful here could discover only two small flaws at one end. And then I cannot but make one remark more on the paper; after the nine pieces sawed off, the stone is still to lose 102½ carats in working, before finished. This is hard, after it cost me a prodigious sum, and that I have run so many eminent hazards, for me to meet with such usage. I flattered myself I was in good hands when in Mr. Cope's, but I am sure now I have better reason to alter my opinion, than Mr. Cope can have" (to alter his) "from 280 to 140. None can believe but that it was my interest to have preserved the magnitude of the stone, although there had been a flaw or two in it; and as you told my son, 280 would make it the wonder of the world, I am sure it will be so, your paring it to 140. I will be speedily with you and discourse more fully about the matter."

It was fortunate perhaps for both men that this threat was not carried out.

On the same date the Governor wrote to his son[1]:

"1705, October 12. Fort St. George. The disappointment in that grand Concerne has not a little disquieted mee, and you nor Sir Stephen, nor any one of you as much as hinted what, in all probability, it would fetch; which you know, could not but have been some satisfaction to mee; and surely you must have had some discourse about it, and their opinion of it, which it seems must be kept a secret from mee. I charge you that you never permit the selling of it under £1500 a carat, and that all my business be managed with the greatest secresye and quiett immagenable and without ostentation. But I think it is too late to forbid that, since you have sett up to live at the rate I heare you doe, which has not created mee a little envye, and makes mee often remember Osborne, that children are certaine trouble but uncertaine comforts."

[1] Dropmore I. 16.

This letter crossed one from his son dated the 3rd of January 1706, in which he says[1]:

"Your grand concern is now almost finished. It is a most glorious sight, but the outer coat was so foul, and the flaws went so deep in it, that it will not come net above 140 carats, which still, being not to be paralleled, is as inestimable as if it were much more. The reason why the pieces, although well spread, yielded no more was that they were very full of flaws; Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Cope both think they have been sold for their full value. When finished the stone will be locked up pending your arrival or further order."

Da Foncesca had sent a full and complete account to the Governor of the cutting and finishing of the stone, which seems to have removed the latter's suspicions and given him peace of mind, for in September 1706 he writes[2]:

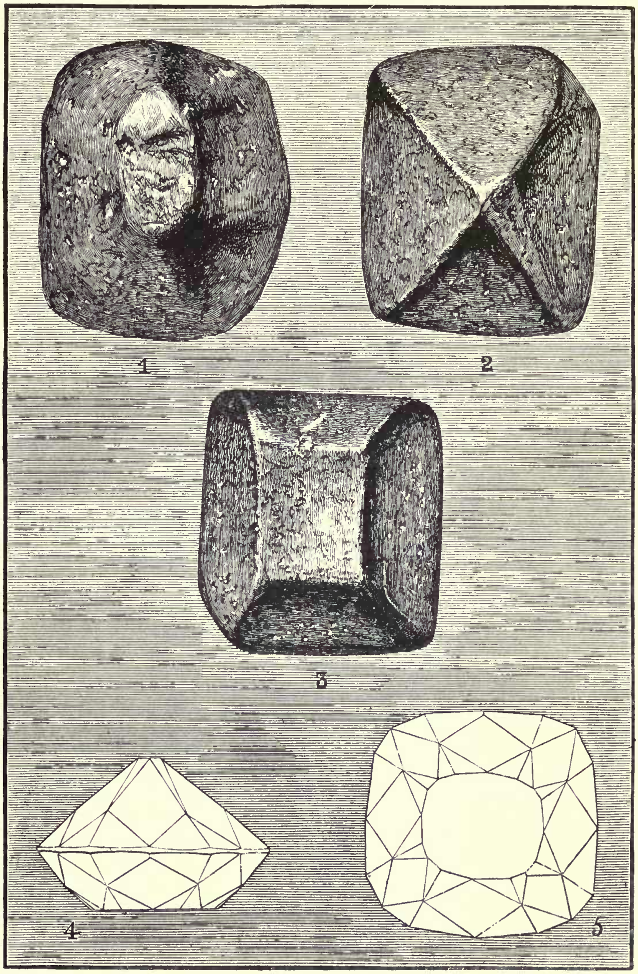
"Dear S^r^ and good ffriend,

I rec'd yours of the 24th of December and 8th of March per the Tankerville, in which I have a more particular account of that grand affair of mine than from my Sone or S^r^ Stephen, and I assure you I think your favours to mee in that matter are as inestimable as the thing it Selfe; and I shall be gready of an oppertunity to acknowledge it otherwise than by words, for with the account you give I'me intirely satisfied, tho' very much Chagrin'd last year, when I was writ that the magnitude would not be above halfe as much as was formerly writ, without giveing any reasons for it. If we are soe lucky as to put Charles on the throne of Spaine, I know nothing he can purchase to make his acknowledgments to our Queen soe acceptable as that matter. I will never part with it without I meet its value, and the least I can think of is fifteen hundred pounds a Carratt."

In the following January his son Robert wrote again to him[3]:

"I find you lay very much to heart the disappointment in the weight of your grand concern. Mr. Cope, when he first began to cut it, told me it would come out near 280 carats; when more pieces were taken off, finding it fouler than he had expected, he told me 180 carats; afterwards the sawing off of

[1] Dropmore I. 16.
[2] Hedges 3. 129.
[3] Dropmore I. 25.




The Pitt diamond (1) in the rough state, (2 and 3) in different stages of its cutting, and (4 and 5) as cut

two more pieces reduced it to its present weight. The stone was entirely perfect in the middle, and of the best water in the world, but the flaws in the outside went so deep that it was necessary to saw off all those pieces, one of the last of which was so rotten that it crumbled into dirt. We never visited Mr. Cope but all together; and it was the opinion of Mr. Alvarez and all that it was better to make a pure stone of a less weight than to keep it greater and have it foul; for the reason that its being at once the largest stone in the world and without flaw, makes it more valuable. I cannot imagine that you were in any ways cheated, for there was never a piece sawed off that I did not myself put on the place whence it was taken, and see if it exactly fitted. Mr. Alvarez was the chief manager in the sale of the pieces, and he protested that he would not have given so much for them, and that, had they been his own, he would have sold them for the same money. It has been finished ever since March last, and locked up in an iron chest which stands in Sir Stephen's back shop; he keeps the key of the padlock, and I keep two keys which unlock the chest. I hear frequent advices have been given of it from Fort St. George, but am sure that by me it was never divulged. I have been asked about it by a hundred people, and all the answer I ever made was that I wished it were true, or that they could make their words good. The spread of it is not at all diminished; it is a perfect star to look at, and has no other significant defect than that of a chapman to buy it."

There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of this circumstantial account of the cutting of the stone, the reasons for the great diminution in its weight and the disposal of the pieces sawn off it. The statements in it were corroborated by a joint letter to the same effect from Robert Pitt, Sir Stephen Evans and Mr John Dolben, who had recently come home from Fort St George, and was now acting for the Governor in this and other matters. In reply to it Governor Pitt wrote to the three on the 16th of September 1707[1]: "Your letter of January 20, satisfies me entirely as to my grand concern, and your disposing of the pieces cut off it." On the 12th of the same month he had written to Da Foncesca[2]:

[1] Dropmore I. 31. [2] Hedges 3. 131.

"I shall say no more as to the great concerne but that I am entirely satisfy'd—and I confirme what I formerly wrote my Attorney that I will not part with it under £1500 a Carrat, which I am sure is as cheap as Neck beef, and let any Potentate buy it, the next day 'tis worth a Million of pounds sterling. I could wish it may be contriv'd soe that it may be bought by the Crown of England for the honour of me and my posterity; and if wee have been successful this last Campaigne as before, I doubt not there will be money enough to buy it, and the parliament have a heart great and gratefull enough to present it to her Majesty. I am alsoe Satisfy'd as to the peices that are cutt off, and I hope when Mr. Dolben is arriv'd, Mr. Cope will hearken to reason as to the polishing of it....In the midst of my trouble and concerne that I was in for my great affair, I allways comforted my Selfe with the assurance that you would take care of it, and I agree with you entirely as to the Judgment of Abendana in the pieces cutt off, and I had the same thought when he represented it to me to be worth £16,000, without being assur'd the goodness in any Respect, 'tis like the valuation of that at 5000 which was not worth one."

Had he been furnished earlier with the explanations now given to him, he would have been spared many an hour of anxiety and suspicion. As a matter of fact the proportion of the weight of the stone which was lost in its cutting was not much larger than that lost in the cutting of the Great Mogul, which according to Tavernier weighed 793 carats in its rough state and 279 when cut and polished.

For the present the Governor's fears with regard to his grand concern centred mainly in the precautions taken for securing its safety. He evidently did not relish the notion of its being kept in the jeweller's back shop; and he seems to have entertained some suspicions that Evans might be tempted to make away with it. Writing to Dolben on the 5th of February 1707, he says:

"Did I not think it uncertain whether this will come to you, I should write you more than I doe, but I must not omitt one thing, which is that there are some that is come upon these

last Years Ships that have thrown a Slurr upon S^r Ste's Credit, such as was formerly when I came, in which I hope there is more malice than truth as was then, for God sake be carefull, for you know my all is at stake in his hands, and if you dispose not of the Grand affair, I believe 'twill be securest in an Iron Chest at the Bank, each of you a different key, or if you think that not the securest place, pray agree upon some other amongst your Selves[1]."

Two days later he wrote to his son about Evans in the same strain[2]:

"On my arrival here I found that some persons had thrown aspersions on him, as to his circumstances, which I wiped off; and this last shipping some have done the same, which I take to be malicious, or else you live very ignorant of matters, or come seldom to that end of the town to inform yourself. I cannot forget Adams, the scrivener, whose failing was as great a surprise as has been known; and what has been may be. Therefore I would have you consider with Mr. Dolben for the securest place to lodge that great concern, each with a key different from the other."

His fears of the danger of leaving the stone in the custody of Evans must have been aggravated rather than relieved by a letter, which he got the next year from his old friend Captain Harrison, in which the following passage occurs[3]: "I can say little to your grand affair...only that in my opinion your presence will be very necessary to the disposall of it. Sir Stephen muddles on at the old rate, some get, some loose; but goes to bed mellow most an end."

As will be seen, the Governor's doubts as to the financial stability of Evans were subsequently justified by the bankruptcy of Sir Stephen.

[1] Hedges 3. 130. [2] Dropmore I. 26.
[3] Dropmore I. 30.

# CHAPTER XVII

## OFFICIAL WORRIES BEGIN

Governor Pitt's anxieties concerning the fate of his great diamond were by no means the only ones that troubled him during the years that followed the union of the two Companies. His position at Fort St George had been seriously compromised by the uncertainty which he thenceforth felt of receiving the cordial support of some half of the directors of the United Company. Till now he had possessed the entire confidence of his employers, and had been allowed a freer hand than any of his predecessors with the happiest possible results. Thus far he seems to have had no difficulties to contend with in dealing with his subordinates. Fraser, who had made himself so intolerable to Governors Yale and Higginson, had been away in command of Fort St David, where he had had few opportunities of undermining his chief's influence at Fort St George, or misrepresenting his actions to members of the Court at home. This happy condition of affairs was now rudely disturbed by the disquieting news which for some time to come nearly every ship brought from London. In the earliest letter which the Governor had received as to the amalgamation of the two Companies, his friend Sir Stephen Evans had told him[1]: "Mr. Richard Gough with some of the New Companys men have a notion of sending out a Generall Supervisor over all

[1] Hedges 3. 76.

India, and the man desired, as I find, is Mr. Roger Braddyll who they have lately perswaded to buy some new East India Stock. This is Kept very private with them, but I am in with both sides, soe they doe nothing but I presently hear of itt. Mr. Gough and Mr. Braddyll have whispered about that you have sent 60,000 Pa: of the Companys money to China in the Hampshire on your own account, which is whispered about to doe You a prejudice. I spoke to Mr. Gough about itt. He said he heard itt. I desir'd to know who told him but he would not tell mee. I am satisfied there is noe such thing, but take it to be in order to promote Mr. Braddyll's interest."

Braddyll's record was by no means a good one[1]. He had entered the service of the Old Company in 1682 as a factor. In 1686, when the disastrous war between the Company and the Mogul was declared, he was at Patna and was imprisoned by the Nawab. He succeeded in making his escape by the assistance of an English sergeant, whom he persuaded to impersonate him and to remain behind in gaol in his place. This poor man, who might apparently have been readily ransomed if the money had been forthcoming, was allowed to remain in captivity for more than seven years, when his release, which Braddyll seems to have taken no steps to procure, was obtained on payment of 800 rupees collected for the purpose "by the charity of severall good minded persons who made a gathering for him" in commiseration of his piteous fate. In the meanwhile he had sent repeated appeals to his fellow countrymen in Bengal. In one of these he writes: "If I have not money to give the Cuttwall and the Keepers of the Prison and the Guards that guard mee, they abuse mee most grossly. If you doe not take some care to relieve me with speed

[1] Hedges 2. 107.

I shall be forc'd to turne Moore, for I am not able to endure the Hardship much longer." "For the lord Jesus Christ's Sake let mee not perish in this hellish prison."

In the meanwhile Braddyll seems to have remained in Bengal and to have done pretty well for himself, though very badly for the Company[1], who in 1696 entertained "more than a suspition of him," and found by their accounts that he "was exceedingly in their debt." They therefore "ordered him to be sent up at once to Fort St George, and to be no further concerned in any service for them in Bengal"; and they directed their Council of the Bay "to secure the debt he owed them by any effects of his, or otherwise in any way they could." Coming to the Fort, he married the widow of Sir John Goldsborough and was taken on to the Council there by Higginson who soon found it necessary to suspend him. His suspension had been removed by Pitt on the advice of Fraser, then at Fort St David, to whom the Governor wrote in November 1699[2]: "You know 'twas by your advice that I tooke Mr. Braddyll into Councill, who proves the most troublesome man beyond expression, and puzzles the Merchants in such a manner with his Conundrums that he has made them halfe mad." About the same time the Court at home were writing out to Fort St George: "When we sent out the Commission by our new President we put in all the names of our then Councill, not knowing of any particular objection against them further then mentioned in our Instructions, however left it to his discretion to suspend any persons he found deserving it; but we find so much in the Consultations relating to Mr. Braddyll that Strikes at the ffoundations of our Authority, as deserves a Severe Reflexion, and therefore leave it to you to act thereon as you shall

[1] Hedges 2. 296.

[2] Hedges 2. 108.

see expedient, by a temporary or totall Suspension, or otherwise, to deter others from the like evill practise."

In pursuance of these instructions Braddyll had been sent home to England in 1701, as appears from a letter from Pitt to Sir Thomas Cook, dated the 18th of October in that year, which contains the following passage: "The man that chiefly disturbed your affairs here, as also wherever he came, did as you suppose returne upon the last shipping, full freighted with Mallice and inventions of his own; but I doubt not that notwithstanding he thinks himself one of the cunningest men in the world, you'll soon find him out."

It was within ten months after the despatch of this letter that Evans sent to the Governor the astounding news that his enemies on the Court were scheming to send Braddyll out as General Supervisor of the United Company's affairs over the whole of India, and that he was disseminating the atrocious libel that the Governor had employed 60,000 pagodas belonging to the Old Company for the purposes of his own private trade. The Old Company's directors must have known the two men too well to attach any credence to this malicious allegation. They knew how much they had lost by Braddyll's dishonesty and incompetence and how much they had gained by the Governor's integrity and ability. The Governor's reply to Evans is dated the 7th of January 1704[1]. "Tis a matter of ridicule with us," he says, "that they talk of Roger Braddyll as a supervisor, for I beleive few or none in India will regard him; for my part I will not. If Mr. Gough and Mr. Braddyll have had the Impudence to report that of my sending 60,000 pagodas of the Companys money to China, or as much as one fanam, I hope if my Son hears 'em he will tell 'em they lye, and

[1] Hedges 3. 85.

I won't faile to confirme it whenever I see 'em, and 'tis a true signe of Braddyll's worth when his interest must be promoted by such a villainous mean." The day before writing this letter he had written to Captain Harrison, who had evidently sent him an account of other statements which Braddyll was spreading to his discredit: "Tis easy to guess what Roger means by proclaiming my Riches, and what must be the naturall question thereon from those that are my enemies, 'where a plague did he get it?' and then comes a nod and a Shrugg, and some dog-like reflection or other, for which it may chance he may be accountable sooner than he is aware of. Wee all know him, and shall take care to value him accordingly."

The Governor may not have been much disturbed by these reports about Braddyll. But there can be no doubt that he bitterly resented the action taken at this time by the Court of the United Company with reference to another of his subordinates, a friend and colleague of Braddyll, Mr William Fraser, who had now been made a member of the Council at Fort St George, and had come from Fort St David to take up his new appointment, thus bringing himself into daily personal relations with his chief. The earliest references to this unfortunate appointment that occur in the Governor's correspondence are to be found in the letters which he wrote home to England to several of his friends in January 1704 simultaneously with those sent to Evans and Harrison, relating to Braddyll. Writing to William Hewer, the faithful servant and lifelong friend of Samuel Pepys, he says with reference to the United Company[1]:

"I find that they are leaning to a Commonwealth Government throughout their Settlements, which I beleive will noe way Suite the Companys Interest where our trade and disputes are with

[1] Hedges 3. 83.

such absolute Monarchs; for my part I never desir'd power for any other Reason than to make me more Capable to Serve my employers, for I am sure I never made use of it but for their advantage, for unless there be a power lodg'd in Some Single person, 'twill be here as it was formerly, their time spent wholy in jangling and quarrelling, to the endangering the ruine of the place." "I am sorry to hear that some of 'em in their debates should urge the necessity of having Spyes and Checks in their Councills abroad, and bring in such as are branded with infamy to such a degree that noe body could have Sat with 'em, and others who are Soe impertinent and troublesome, besides soe insipid, that they were never capable by their advice or otherwise of making any advantage to their Masters or themselves but have rather been the Occasion of the loss of vast Sums, and this must be Said and for a truth too, that where the East India Company have Suffer'd here abroad by Knavery in their Servants £1000, they Suffer'd at least £10,000 by employing of ffools; and how can it be expected that any by their advice or otherwise, shall contribute towards getting an estate for their Employers, when they think themselves incapable of managing what little they have of their own, by leaving it to others.

You are a good judge and have the right sentiment of this matter, but I know from whome this project comes, who made Confusion wherever he resided and Sacrific'd the Companys Interest allways to his own, and as I hear wants now to come out on a post to disturb your whole affairs that he may make the advantage of fishing in troubled waters.

I esteem you my ffriend and therefore have imparted my mind freely to you."

Of the three men referred to in this letter, the last, who is described as the author of the project to put "Spyes and Checks" upon the Governor, was evidently Braddyll. Of the other two, one was Fraser and the other Charles Dubois, a man of blemished reputation, the brother of the highly respectable Secretary of the Company. Dubois had apparently been nominated to act as one of the Madras Council, but died before he took up the office.

Writing at the same time to his friends John Styleman and Robert Raworth at the India Office, the Governor says to the former[1]: "They have putt

[1] Hedges 3 84, 85.

Mr. Frazier and Mr. Du Bois into the Council here, as able Spyes and Checks, and 'tis said next year being thoroughly inform'd of the ability of the one and the integrity of the other, they intend to make 'em both equall in power with the Governor"; and to the latter: "Tis generally reported that 'twas urged there was a necessity of adding two to the Councill, for Spyes and Checks upon the President, one of which" (Fraser) "that has neither a Graine of Sense nor Manners, nor ever any way contributed to getting a penny for his employers, but by his incontroulable nonsensicall obstinacy has lost 'em many a thousand pounds, and for the other" (Dubois) "I shall say noe more of, for the respect I bear his brother, tho' I must say this that he had not a dram of Integrity, and had he been living I could never have condescended to have sat with him in Councill, for it would have made your Government Scandalous and Infamous, and neither white nor black would have regarded it."

Some months later he writes in the same strain to Sir William Langhorne[1]:

"I should have own'd my Selfe very much obliged to the Managers who write that they unanimously chuse me in their Service, thô private letters say that I was ellected by balletting, and carry'd it but by one from Mr. John Pitt, which has been industriously spread here and in Bengall, and doubtless all other parts of India. But I cannot but resent the blemish they put upon me, when they came to fill up the Council here, first in putting in Mr. Ffrazier, and secondly the reasons they gave for it, which I hear our old Masters oppos'd, who represented his temper and deportment intolerable, and his ignorance in all affairs unspeakable, soe that he could not be in any way serviceable to them, all which 'tis writ the New Companys people confess'd, but still insisted on his being one of the Councill, for that he would be a good Spye.

What must become of that Government, when such as Ffrazier are in the Councill, who runs about boasting of a letter he has received from the New Company, promising him great

[1] Hedges 3. 95.

matters, and inculcating after his foolish method into the people that the power now of this place is in the Councill, and the Governor *nothing*, of which I have convinc'd some of his under spyes with a chawbuck, and doe and will bear him accordingly, for whilst I am here I'le govern according to the power given me in the Commision I brought out, which is never yet superseded.

Tis said here too which I have reason to Creditt, that the vile good for nothing wretch, with some others, have underhand perswaded the merchants, who have been in prison soe long, not to pay their debt to the Old Company, for that a new Governour would come out, and then they might get clear of it for little or nothing."

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Governor had been rightly informed by his friends at home that it was the representatives of the New Company on the Court at home who had insisted on the appointment of Fraser on the Council of Fort St George ; and that they had taken him up at the instigation of Braddyll. Both Braddyll and Fraser were servants of the Old Company ; and consequently in their case the New Company's men could have had no reason to promote their interests out of regard for past services. Their only bond of union was their common animosity to Pitt, whom they sought to annoy by trying to lessen his authority. The majority of the directors of the United Company must have been well aware of the very serious risks which they would run, if they attempted to set up a Rotation Government at Fort St George on similar lines to those on which they had established their Council in Bengal. They cannot have failed to recognise the ridiculous and perilous position in which their settlements in Madras would have been placed under such a form of government, in the event of Daud Khan or any other general of the Mogul returning to blockade the fort, or of it becoming necessary to enter into negotiations with the Mogul. They had recently seen the disastrous consequences which had followed

divided counsels and opposing interests in the conduct of the embassy of Sir William Norris, and the conspicuous successes alike in action and in diplomacy which Governor Pitt had achieved, so long as he had been allowed a free hand, and which had raised his reputation far higher than that of any other Englishman of his day and generation in India. The minority of the Court who desired at this time to supersede him or to induce him to resign, or to belittle his authority, may have been comparatively small. But small though it was, its enmity was implacable, and for the next few years it never seems to have lost a chance of irritating or defaming him. In both respects they succeeded only too well. In his correspondence he can never control himself when writing of Fraser, who very shortly afterwards, by the death of Mr Ellis, the senior member of his Council, became next in authority to himself in Madras. Writing to his friend Styleman in December 1704, Pitt says[1]: "You must have heard by last ship the death of Mr. John Pitt and Mr. Ellis, Soe Frasier is here a second, who is likewise the ridicule and Buffoon of the Town, and if it were not for Mr. Hunt wee should have had noe books, who he has almost made mad with his impertinences." It was probably the death of Ellis that caused him to alter his resolution of coming home to look after his diamond and his family. For he could not bear to leave the enemy he loathed and despised to take his place as Governor. The death of Ellis must have also stimulated the longing of Fraser to become Governor of Fort St George, and encouraged him to spare no efforts to make his chief's position an intolerable one. It is not unlikely that it was at his or Braddyll's instigation that the many little petty slights of which the Governor complains in his correspondence originated,

[1] Hedges 3. 94.

one of which was the making him pay freight for the wine sent out to him[1].

In the meanwhile Pitt had given the Court admirable advice impressing on them the importance of strengthening their garrisons in the Carnatic[2]. Of the sixteen soldiers who had arrived from England that season, twelve were already dead, and it was obvious that unless stronger reinforcements were sent out, the small force at his command would be hopelessly depleted. He had also pressed for a further supply of military stores, and particularly mortars, as the throwing of shells amongst the native troops during the late blockade had produced the greatest terror amongst the besiegers. As a further measure of precaution, he requested permission to raise a troop of sixty horse to act as convoys and to repel incursions of the native cavalry. At the same time he informed the Court that his Council had found it necessary to apply to the Company's agent at Bencoolen to send him fifty Baggasses or Javanese soldiers with their officers to serve the Company for five years. As a justification of these very moderate proposals he had pointed out that the French garrison of the rapidly growing settlement of Pondicherry alone was already more numerous than the whole of the troops which he had at the Company's two forts, St George and St David. Even at this early date he noted with apprehension the rising power of the French in the Carnatic, and warned the Court that in the event of war with France it would constitute in the future a standing menace to the Company's stations there. Had his warning not fallen on unheeding ears, the English in Madras would have entered on the struggle with the French for supremacy in India in the days of his famous grandson under far more favourable

[1] Hedges 3. 97. [2] Bruce 3. 504.

conditions than they were fated to do. Whilst thus impressing on the Court at home the necessity of sending out to him adequate troops and military stores, he himself persistently continued the strengthening of the fortifications of Black Town[1]. By the end of 1707 he had encircled it with a permanent brick-faced wall stated by Salmon to have been "seventeen feet thick with bastions at proper distances after the modern way of fortifications." This very important addition to the defences of the settlement, commenced, as already mentioned, in 1700 in anticipation of Daud Khan's blockade, was paved on the top so that cannon might be mounted on it. It is shown plainly on the survey of Fort St George made by his orders during his Governorship. On its completion Salmon says: "Madras considering where it stands might now be reckoned a town of strength, if the garrison was answerable to the fortifications." Pitt seems to have been more fortunate than his predecessors in recovering the cost of its erection from the inhabitants of the town. Nor did he fail to take measures of precaution for the victualling of his settlement in the event of another blockade. The river Coum, which ran at the back of the fort, inclosed an island that had hitherto been left uncultivated[2]. This he improved by hedging it round, and ditching it, so as to make it of service for the pasturage of cattle, which he foresaw would be of great use to the garrison, more especially in times of trouble. It would appear also from the survey above referred to that he planted on the island some groves, a garden, and a double avenue called the Great Walk, which must have added considerably to the amenities of the settlement. A powder house is also shown on the island

[1] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, 2. 41. [2] Wheeler 2. 41

of which Lockyer says: "Most of the Powder expended in the Garrison is made on the Island, about a Gun-shot from the Town. It has not the force of what comes from England; for no other reason than not well incorporating the ingredients. They have the finest Saltpetre and Brimstone, with good Charcole, which ought to make the best Powder; but for want of skilful Managers and good Contrivances, these excellencies are of no effect[1]."

The native officials were still disposed to regard the English community at Madras as remaining there on sufferance only. About this time the Foujdar of St Thomé had imprisoned an Armenian inhabitant of Fort St George, and irritated apparently by some expression in one of the Governor's letters, ventured to write to him in the following terms[2]:

"From Marusman, Foujdar of St. Thomé.

I have power over Chinnapatam" (*i.e.* Fort St George) "and likewise over St. Thomé, as it belongs to the King, whose grant of Chinnapatam ground to the Company was on no other intent than to make the place fruitful, and bring riches into his kingdom, but not to act anything that should be unjust or prejudicial to the Merchants interest there. I can not help putting you in mind of the Governors of Golconda and Bijapore, who for their unjust actions and ill behaviour were instantly turned out of their Province notwithstanding all their resistance and clapped into irons. What reason therefore has the King to value any one, seeing that he turns out whoever he pleases, and who by his great kindness and justice towards his people has obtained power of God to conquer wheresoever he comes, and knowing me to be one of his Officers, I wonder at the style you write me. What can I say more?"

The Governor's reply to this insulting missive was in a very different tone from that which he was in the habit of employing when writing to the higher officials of the Mogul. Whilst characteristically returning insult for insult, and magnifying the authority of his own sovereign, he was careful to

[1] Lockyer, p. 25. [2] Wheeler 2. 34.

speak in respectful terms of the Foujdar's superiors. He wrote back at once as follows:

"To Marusman, Foujdar of St. Thomé.

I received your impertinent and insolent letter. We all know your King to be great, wise and just, and many of his nobles to be persons of great honour; but most of his little Governors, amongst whom I reckon you, to be very corrupt and unjust. We would have you to know that we are of a nation, whose sovereign is great and powerful, able to protect his subjects in their just rights over all the world, and revenge whatever injustices shall be done to them, of which there will be speedy instances given. I am not a little surprised at your saucy expressions, as well as actions in imprisoning my inhabitants, when you know that I can fetch you hither and correct you for both. This is an answer to your letter. Thomas Pitt."

As was to be expected, Marusman appealed to Daud Khan to support him. But Daud was away from his province and at the Court of the Mogul. In view of his recent costly and abortive attempt to reduce Fort St George by blockade, it is unlikely that he would have had any inclination to try conclusions again with Governor Pitt, if he had been at hand. On his return to Arcot, the Governor sent him a complimentary present of a hundred bottles of liquors. This welcome gift seems to have been appreciated by him; for he remained quiet for the next six months[1], at the end of which time he came to St Thomé with a small force of between five and six hundred horse and foot, and expressed an earnest desire to dine again with the Governor. Two members of the Council and the Secretary, who were sent to pay their respects to him, met with an extraordinarily kind reception. He presented each of them with an emerald ring worth about thirty or forty pagodas, and gave them a jewel valued at a hundred or a hundred and fifty pagodas, for the Governor; at the same time reiterating his

[1] Wheeler 2. 45.

request to be invited to dinner. In response to this intimation an immediate invitation was sent him, coupled with the condition that he would not bring with him more than twenty of his guards. This condition he undertook to comply with, and the necessary preparations for the dinner were made. At the appointed time he turned up at the Company's Garden with two hundred of his men; and on being informed by Narrain, the Brahmin in the pay of the Company, that the Governor would not admit so many within the fort, sent word that if he could not be received with the whole of the men he had brought "it would be the same thing for him if the dinner were sent to him at the Garden." As the Governor positively refused to allow him to bring more than twenty of his men into the fort, the dinner and all other necessaries were sent to him at the Garden, "whither," to quote from the Consultation Book, "the Secretary and Narrain returned, who were to acquaint the other Gentlemen with the Governor's resolution; and that the Guns he intended to fire were for the King's health, his own and such of the Great ministers of State as were his friends. About five in the evening the English gentlemen returned from the Garden, and gave the following account. That the Nabob at first seemed out of humour at the answer that was sent him, when it was believed that he would not dine there; but after some pausing, he dissembled his resentment and sat down to dinner, and ate heartily, and tasted the liquors sent him, which he liked very well. After dinner the present was set before him which at first he seemingly refused, but afterwards accepted of it; and soon after rose up and returned to St Thomé."

It would seem from this entry in the Consultation Book that Daud, though anxious to see the interior of the fort again, presumably with the intention of

ascertaining the strength of its defences, was unwilling to trust himself in the Governor's hands without a sufficient escort; and that the Governor, on his part on guard against a surprise, was by no means disposed to give facilities for this inspection, and thought it well to remind Daud in the course of his repast, by repeated salvoes of artillery ostensibly fired in his honour and that of the Mogul, of the sort of reception that awaited any enemy who might attempt, as Daud on one occasion had threatened to do, "to fall in upon the garrison by force of arms and make it surrender." Be this as it may, both parties appear to have parted on friendly terms from one another; and however much Daud may have enjoyed his dinner, it seems to have been the last one that he got from Governor Pitt.

The winding up of the separate affairs of the Old and New Companies in India was a tedious and troublesome business; but that so much of it as fell to the Governor's share was performed to the full satisfaction of the Court of the Old Company is clear from the following letter, which they sent to him, when it was approaching its completion:

"We assure you," they say, "that we have a particular relyance on yourself, to see the whole compleated. We are sensible your active genius and hearty espousing our Interest has been the main Spring, that has set all the other wheels in motion, and as we have experimentally found the benefitt which has accrued to us by your being at the head of our Affairs on the Coast in many instances from your first arrivall at Madrass during the whole Struggle and Competition with the New Company and their servants, Soe we own to you that we perceive the same Zeal inspires you hitherto in looking after our Separate Affairs, and doubt not but it will run through the whole of your Management till

all our pending affairs are perfectly adjusted and the last penny of our Separate Estate is remitted to England[1]."

At the same time Dubois, the Secretary of the Company, wrote to him: "You will see by the Companys letter their sense of your Service to them, especially in the affair of the joint stock merchants, whose debt you have so well secured. This has stopped the mouths of every body on that head." "I hope you will think fit to remain in your Government some time longer. Since you have made so great a progress in settling matters, you ought to have the glory of finishing[2]."

So satisfied indeed were the representatives of both Companies with the manner in which he had done this branch of his work, that he was given control over the separate interests of the Old Company in Bengal, as well as in Madras[3], while the directors of the New Company applied to him as being the only person who could rescue their interests on the Coromandel Coast from the embarrassments in which they had been left by his cousin Consul John Pitt. Had he foreseen the treatment that awaited him at their hands, he might have thought twice before undertaking the very onerous and unpleasant business which he was thus solicited by his old enemies to undertake on their behalf.

[1] Hedges 3. 102. [2] Dropmore 1. 20.
[3] Bruce 3. 587.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FURTHER OFFICIAL TROUBLES

THE winding up of the affairs of the New Company in Madras, when taken in hand by Governor Pitt, was to all intents and purposes little more than a composition with its creditors of the debts of a derelict undertaking possessed of no visible or available assets. The Company had started in business with so small a working capital, that the failure of its proprietors had been inevitable from the first. A substantial proportion of its scanty funds had been absorbed by the expenses of the costly embassy to the Mogul. A still larger amount had gone to the bottom of the sea in the wreck of the *Norris*. In anticipation of the safe arrival of that unfortunate ship, the Company's servants at Masulipatam had incurred serious liabilities in their dealings with the native merchants, with whom they had entered into extravagant contracts for the supply of Eastern goods shipped to England. When it became evident that they were unable to meet these liabilities by any other means than further promises to pay, the position of their President, Mr William Tillard, who had succeeded their late Consul John Pitt, became so intolerable that he and his staff were compelled to flit by night from their factory, in order to take refuge at Fort St George from their exasperated creditors. Without waiting for the arrival of a ship

to convey them thither, they had evacuated their quarters and made what seems to have been a troublesome and somewhat perilous journey overland, the details of which are thus recorded in Tillard's Diary:

"Ye 25th Sept in ye evening sett out frm Metchl$^{m}$ in order to go to Fort St. George overland, being necessitated thereto by ye impetuous clamours of ye Merchts. for ye money owing them by ye Comp$^{a}$.

Ye 26th Sept. we arrived at Trimaneer fort abt. 10 in ye morn$^{g}$ & ab$^{t}$. an hour after at Nerracoedre & the next day we began to pass the river w$^{ch}$ we were 3 days in doing having but 3 sangarees, and ye river very broad & ye freshes coming down. When we were over I sent to Tripatee for a boat to pass over ye other river about an hour's journey from us, but he put us off from time [to] time, so that we found he designed us a trick. But his enemy lying on ye other side of s$^{d}$ river, whom he was afraid of, he lent us a country boat to repass ye river we came over, which we did October 1, and having endeavoured allways to gitt forw$^{d}$ on our journey & all in vain because of ye partys of robbers that lay on ye road, I writt ye 4th d$^{to}$ to Metchl$^{m}$ for ye Comp$^{a}$ Country B$^{t}$ w$^{ch}$ we mett att Baherlanca ye 7th d$^{to}$, and ye same day went down ye river in her as far as Chippaleer, design$^{g}$ for Pettepolle, but hear$^{g}$ from ye country people of that place that Pettepolle was also in trouble thro fear of ye robbers, we resolved to go over ye Barr of ye river, and so to go to Dauramparr by sea. Accordingly we sailed fr$^{m}$ Chippaleer ye 8th, and gott over ye Barr to ye Southward of Pettepolle point, & next morn$^{g}$ came before Dauramparr, but having a fair wind and fine weather we resolved to go as far as Kisnapatam river where we arrived safe ye 10. We run a great hasard it is true in going in an open boat at this time of ye year, & so many people in her, viz. 3 English beside myself, & between 100 and 110 blacks and with us we had a great deal of lumber amongst wh$^{ch}$ were 3 Pallankins beside Doolys. But we were forced to do as we did, else must have returned back to Metchlep$^{m}$.

Ye 11th Oct in ye morn$^{g}$ we went fr$^{m}$ ye s$^{d}$ river overland to Duhraspatam, where we arrived in ye even$^{g}$. The 12th in ye morn$^{g}$ we left Duhraspatam and arrived at Pollicat ye next day and came to Ulw$^{ra}$.

Ye 14th we arrived at Trigature (Tiruchendar), about an hour and an halfs journey to ye northw$^{d}$ of Fort St. George. About 2 in ye after noon we went fro thence to Narraiads garden, where we arrived an hour afterwards, where we mett

wth Mr. Wright and Mr. Raworth, 2 of ye Council of Fort St. George. We slept abt 2 hours at ye garden and arrived at ye Govs garden abt 5 in ye eveng, the Govr made us very welcome[1]."

This ignominious throwing up of the sponge by his late rivals in trade cannot have taken the Governor by surprise. Four years before, when his cousin the Consul had started as his competitor at Masulipatam, he had written: "Mind your trade, which is your Masters business, and when the Moors have bang'd you and Stript you of what you have, upon your Submission and begging pardon for what you have done, I may Chance to protect you here. I can't but laugh at your promising us protection when you have neither forces, power nor Interest in the Countrey. When ours are assign'd you, you may talk at that rate[2]." More recently he had written home: "'Tis not my busyness to Censure the management of my kinsman, who was very great and wise in his own thoughts, but this I'le write you, that there are no Generall books kept, noe consultations, and I believe your Company indebted at Metchlepatam a farr greater sum than they think of[3]." Now the game was played out; and the day of reckoning had come. The servants of the New Company on their own initiative had fled for refuge to Fort St George to sue for protection. Close upon their heels followed their indignant creditors, clamouring for payment of their debts and complaining bitterly that they had been defrauded. Such was the position that confronted the Governor when called upon by the directors of the New Company to make the best settlement he could on their behalf.

A more thankless and embarrassing task it would have been difficult for his enemies to have imposed on him. One thing only could satisfy the merchants,

[1] 15*th Report of the H.M.S. Comn.* Appendix x. p. 90.
[2] Hedges 3. 48. [3] Hedges 3. 86.

and abate the scandal thrown on the credit of the English trade in the East by the transactions of his compatriots and kinsman at Masulipatam: and that was the prompt payment of a substantial portion of the New Company's debts in cash, or with something that could readily be converted into cash. The Governor had no authority to apply any part of the Old Company's funds for this purpose, or to pledge their credit for the benefit of the proprietors of the New Company. After the experiences they had undergone, the merchants would certainly not be contented with bills drawn by Tillard on his employers, unless some substantial persons at Fort St George were willing to give gold or silver in exchange for them. Nor were any of the other merchants at the fort likely to buy the bills unless the Governor would set the example by sacrificing a considerable part of his own private capital or that of his friends in their purchase. It must have been with great reluctance that he decided to encroach on his cherished and productive store of precious metal for the sake of relieving the embarrassments of men, the majority of whom, though now his masters, were, as he knew, desirous of any pretext to find fault with him. But the English credit, which had hitherto stood high in the Eastern trade, was at stake; and he must have felt that it was his duty to maintain it at any reasonable cost, and that if he failed to do so he would be bitterly blamed at home. On the other hand, if it were known to the proprietors of the New Company that he was the chief person concerned in the purchase of the bills, he had every reason to fear that the New Company men would without the slightest hesitation or remorse throw him over and repudiate the transaction. That he had grave misgivings from the first that they would do so is manifest from the letters which he sent home to Evans and his son with

the bills in the same ship, the *Duchess*, that took Tillard and the New Company's accounts to England in the following spring. In one of these letters he says:

"ffeby. the 5th. 1704-5.

I have sent you Some effects on these Ships, and principally in bills of exchange on the New Company, which I hope they will honourably comply with, in regard that the loan of the money here has very much contributed to their honour as well as interest, for that they were indebted very considerably at Metchlepatam whose Merchants followed their President hither, and have been very clamorous and troublesome till wee rais'd money to pay off good part thereof, which was rais'd by a great many people of this place, I am concern'd myselfe thirty nine thousand pagodas, but have sent a bill in my own name for noe more than ten thousand five hundred, which is made payable to you two, and the other twenty eight thousand five hundred as hereafter mention'd is made payable to S^r^ Stephen Evance, thô I consigne it to you both, and letters are sent by each person to S^r^ Stephen Evance to Countenance it and I have taken Declarations of trust from each person, soe pray let it be conceal'd, as I intend it, and if the Company can't pay you in money, and you see noe reason to the contrary, take their bonds at interest, and if they pay you money, I doe empower you, if you meet with an advantageous purchase in Wiltsheir or Dorsetsheir, to lay it out all or any part of it, and if it should exceed the sum you may take it up at interest till I send more effects or come my Selfe, but let it be bought in S^r^ Stephen's name with the advice of Mr. Dobyn, Cozen Ettrick and Cozen Tom Pitt, and if noe such thing offers, then put it at secure interest, or where it may make some advantage towards the bearing the charges of my ffamily.

Since writing the foregoing I have been considering how to arme you to dispute with the New Company, if they should refuse the paying of these bills, the loan of which money has been at the earnest request of their President, Mr. Tillard, who comes on the Dutchess, who I take to be a very honest man, and I am sure will give you all assistance that lyes in his power, whome I would not have to come into any trouble if possible to be avoided, what he has done in this matter has been by the advice of the President and Councill, all which relating thereto I send you Copy thereof, which must be only for your own direction and not publish'd by any means[1]."

[1] Hedges 3. 98.

The Governor's misgivings were fully justified. The directors of the separate affairs of the New Company were very much taken aback at finding the extent of the liabilities which had been incurred on their behalf. For years they had been living in a fool's Paradise, misled by the sanguine letters sent home from time to time by their late President. It is unlikely that they learnt the true history of their affairs at Masulipatam until after a protracted inquiry and close examination of President Tillard and the documents brought home by him. Pending the result of this scrutiny they refused to accept the bills, which had been drawn on them by him, and questioned not only the amount of their debts to the merchants as admitted by their representatives in India, but also the interest allowed on it, and the rate of exchange at which the bills had been drawn. As might have been expected, they were ultimately convinced that Governor Pitt, who was the last man in the world to pay away money without clear proof that it was owing, and who was far too well versed in the tricks of the natives to be readily imposed upon, had not paid the merchants too much. But it was very difficult to make them understand that he had not overcharged them. In dealing with him and his friends, who had advanced the money to pay the merchants, they affected to ignore the elementary truth, which the smallest knowledge of the Eastern trade should have made clear to them, that the rate of interest on debts in India was higher than in Europe, and that the purchasing value of a pagoda, which was nine shillings in England, was very much more in India. They must have known that in the most favourable circumstances gold and silver, the most profitable articles to carry from England to the East, took many months to get there; and their own recent experience in the wreck of the *Norris* must

have taught them that those who sent bullion out ran a considerable risk of losing it altogether on the way. The correspondence that ensued between the Governor and his Council on the one hand and their advisers and opponents on the other on these and other points was heated and protracted. The following extracts from it will suffice to show its nature, and the attitude of the two parties on the main points in dispute.

The first intimation that the bills were dishonoured that reached the Governor seems to have been contained in a letter from his son Robert, dated the 3rd of January 1706, who writes[1]:

"The bills drawn on the Company are protested for non acceptance, and we cannot proceed against them at law until after the long vacation. If we are all hearty in the business we shall certainly cast them, but I fear that Lord Halifax, who is concerned in those bills, will not join with us; as well because he will be satisfied underhand as that he will be tender to his own brat. You know he was a great promoter of the New Company, and in discourse we held lately, seemed unwilling to take rigorous measures against it for the recovery of money."

In a letter to the Governor, dated a day later, Sir Gilbert Dolben writes[2]: "You will have been informed by Sir Stephen Evance and your son that the Directors of the English Company refuse to accept the bills drawn on them by Mr. Tillard, although it has been sufficiently demonstrated to them that the money for which these bills were drawn was applied in satisfaction of their debts and to support their credit. If not in a better mind when the bills become due, effectual measures will be taken to compel them to make payment, although they are mightily exalted since their union with the other

[1] Dropmore I. 16. [2] Dropmore I. 17.

Company. Although that union be advantageous to the Companies, and perhaps to the trade, it will in my opinion prove very prejudicial to their fellow subjects. For besides their engrossing the market, they have gained such an addition of strength and interest by being united, that scarce any particular persons are able to cope with them. But we who have demands on them resolve to unite in encountering them."

In a letter dated the 8th of February in the same year, Charles Du Bois, the Secretary of the United Company, speaking of the services done by the Governor to the Company in another matter, says[1]: "This has stopped the mouths of everybody on that head; and the New Company have now nothing but Tillard's bills of exchange to talk of. I have told their leaders my opinion of that matter, but I see they apprehend themselves ill dealt with by too high an exchange taken on the bills."

About the same time Robert Pitt and Evans seem to have written to the Governor advising a compromise. To this he was strongly opposed, and wrote back to them on the 29th of September in that year[2]:

"I received the protests, and enough of them to have roasted a Bartholomew Fair pig. I like your first resolutions as to compelling the Company to pay the bills, but afterwards I find you are become very pusillanimous, and incline to abatement. I had rather lose the whole sum than a day's interest. Mr. Tillard can neither say nor do anything to our prejudice. Mess^rs Dolben and Affleck on their arrival will join heartily in the prosecution, thereby easing Sir Stephen, and will justify it false that the merchants were not to have their money until after the bills had been paid; who had most of it down, and the remainder soon after, for their condition is such they could not stay for it, no more than the nation could for the two millions for which they have made the Company pay 8 per centum per annum. An honest country gentleman Parliament may chance to take a review of that too. For my part I wonder at the foolish

[1] Dropmore I. 20. [2] Dropmore I. 22.

questions they ask, as why was it not done for them? when they had not a penny in the place, nor credit. I am not insensible of the kindness the New Company have for me, and shall not be backward in making them suitable returns when it lies in my power. They have written us some very odd sorts of letters, and we have given them such answers as they deserve.

Mr. Tillard's examination before the Committee does not prejudice the bills; and for the four you mention that make it their business, within and without doors, to oppose the payment of them, I doubt not they would rob upon the highway if they had but courage."

The tone of the answers to which the Governor refers in this letter may be gathered from the following extract from a letter written by him and his Council to the Court of Directors for the separate affairs of the New Company dated the 21st of September 1706:

"You say you think it not reasonable that you should pay more money than was paid to the Black Merchants, and that at Nine Shillings a Pagoda. Where is the obligation or Custom for anybody to lend you money on those termes? don't you yourselves when you lend money to subsist Ships abroad make them pay Fifty Pr. cent? and the same Profit upon all Damaged Goods? We are here Merchants too, and make it our care to turne our money to the best advantage. What sort of Idiot must that be to Lend you a Pagoda at Nine Shillings, when at Bottomry at that time could have had Thirteen and Sixpence, and Diamonds security? or to have bought them, would have made from Sixteen Shillings to Twenty Shillings a Pagoda? The Governour believes all of you have been concerned, as he has, in buying of Tallys, Exchequer Notes, Bank Bills and East India Bonds, and did you ever hear that the Persons who bought them were question'd for it, and thô never so cheap anything deducted when Payment made? and then for the security of the two former, there was the faith of the Nation, not to be mentioned with that of a Company; so then are your bonds so sacred as not to be bought or sold, or of so little value that we should not have regarded them[1]?"

Before these letters reached England, Evans had compromised and agreed to an abatement of the amounts to be paid to the holders of the bills, a

[1] Hedges 3. 110.

course to which great exception was taken by the Governor and which confirmed his suspicions that Sir Stephen was short of ready money, and that it was unsafe to trust him any longer with the custody of his great diamond[1]. It will be seen from the following letter from the Governor and his Council to the Court of the New Company that the letter notifying that the bills would be paid was nearly a year in reaching its destination, and that when the terms of the compromise subsequently reached Fort St George they gave great dissatisfaction to the holders of the bills[2].

"20th Dec. 1707.

Honble Sirs,

We received yours of the 26th of April 1706 by the Indian Frigatt, who arrived here on the 24th April last, in which you advise you are come to an Agreement on the Bills of Exchange drawn on your Company by Mr. Tillard, and that you shall pay them to the satisfaction of the bearers thereof, but by the last ships, the Howland and Dutchess, those concerned here have received an Account on what terms you have pay'd them, wich is Nine Shillings and Sixpence a Pagoda, instead of Ten Shillings and Sixpence, Three per cent discount, noe Interest from the time they were due, and half pr cent charg'd for recovering what they did of you, with which the Proprietors here are greatly dissatisfyed, and think they have unparallel'd injustice done them.

(Sd by) Tho. Pitt, M. Empson,
W. Martin, Rob. Raworth.
Tho. Frederick and Rich. Hunt."

In another letter of the same date with reference to certain questions raised by the Company as to the accounts of their late President, Consul Pitt, they write[3]:

"We observe your resentment of the actions of your Metchlepatam President, with whom T. Pitt held no manner of correspondence or had to doe with him for a fanam, after he came into your Service, soe is wholely a stranger to any frauds committed by him, or any piscashes he received, yet cant but think

[1] Dropmore I. 26.
[2] Hedges 3. 106.
[3] Hedges 3. 105.

you had hard usage in some respects, but know not whether it may be justly imputed to his infidelity, Ignorance or carelessness, and Mr. R. Raworth he was then very young, and the top of his preferment was a little while the secretary, soe was never let into the *arcana imperia*. As to the Dustore Mr. Tillard, wee suppose, informs you, that it was shared between the Chief Dubash and some Conocopolies, for that you have noe credit for it in any of your accounts, but the Merchants paid it. How well satisfy'd the proprietors of your bills are with the payment, is fully answer'd in other letters, only we must advise you this is a great truth, that your paying those bills in the manner you did, and wee not paying the West Coast, has so impaired the credit of Companys that black nor white will not lend anything considerable to 'em, unless your Governor gives his single bond, instances of which is few days past."

It is difficult to believe that the directors of the New Company really entertained the suspicion that Governor Pitt was implicated in the business transactions of his late cousin, or considered that the delinquencies of the latter had any bearing on the questions in dispute with reference to the bills. The mere fact that they imported this matter into the controversy indicates how weak they must have felt their case to be. That they had full confidence in the Governor's honesty seems clear from the next step which they took, which was to leave the settlement of the remainder of their debt at Masulipatam unreservedly in his hands. Writing to Dolben on the 11th of September 1707, he says[1]: "I wrote you by the Loyall Cooke how matters stood as to the New Companys debt, what scurrilous and impertenent letters they wrote hither, and the answer we gave 'em; but this year to my great amazement they have thrown the matter wholely into my hands, but with an *If* they owe any more, for me to clear it and draw bills upon 'em for the same, which bills if there was money to be taken up makes me lyable for payment if they should be protested."

[1] Hedges 3. 104.

Notwithstanding the unfairness of this proposal, he accepted it, but at the same time appealed to their sense of justice to treat him honourably. On the 17th of December 1707 he wrote to them[1]:

"Srs,

'Twas with no small surprise to me to see that you honour'd me with your Commands, which I will be sure to execute with the nicest honour and care imaginable and the best judgment I am capable of.

I did conceive I had done you an eminent piece of Service (and believe time has or will confirm it) in assisting as I did Mr. Tillard, in paying soe considerable a part of your Metchlepatam debt, for having not only been an eye witness, but likewise concern'd in England, in buying East India bonds, Tallies, bank notes &ca which I never heard was censur'd as unfair or illegall, encourag'd me to buy yours here, which was a demonstrable advantage to yourselves, and no less than preserving the Merchants from ruine, but you who are the fountaine of Justice have convinc'd me of my error in making so considerable an abatement as a shilling upon each pagoda—three pr. cent prompt payment, as if the bills had been put up to Sale, and a whole year's interest, besides put us to a charge of ½ pr cent recovering it, all which amounts to less than 18 and 20 pr cent; but hope when you have consider'd it, you'll find it more just and reasonable to repay it, then at first you did to deduct it; for I assure you I came not into that undertaking wholely for my own Interest, for that I could have invested my money to as much or more advantage, and nothing induc'd me to it soe much as the consideration that I then serv'd my friends as well as my Selfe, but let some Sycophants Suggest to you what they please, had not that money been paid, the merchants would have had reason to have been ten times more angry with us than you happen'd to be upon paying it. At present I shall say no more on this Interest, not doubting but you have or will do us justice therein. My Service to you all.

I am, Honble Srs,

Your most obedt humble Servant,

Tho. Pitt."

In view of the very full explanation of the circumstances in which the Governor was induced to

[1] Hedges 3. 106.

buy these bills, as set out in the foregoing correspondence, it is difficult to endorse the opinion which has been expressed by some writers, that any discredit attaches to his conduct in the business. It should be borne in mind that the only persons who questioned the propriety of his proceedings at the time were his avowed and implacable enemies, and that even they, after hearing his explanations, left the final settlement of the remainder of their debt unreservedly in his hands. But although this may have been some consolation to him, there can be no room for doubt that the continued irritation so studiously fomented by the vexatious proceedings of the representatives of the New Company in England and their confidential spies in his Council at Fort St George was beginning to tell upon him, and that the small residue of his patience was becoming rapidly exhausted. In a letter written to the Court of the Old Company[1], whilst the dispute about these bills was still pending (16th September 1706), he goes so far as to inquire whether after all it is not possible to dissolve the Union between the two Companies which in his opinion was doing so much mischief in India, and he offers to come home at once if necessary to assist in this project. "Surely," he asks, "will their never be a Turne of Times againe, that you will be able to wrest this Trade out of the Hands of those that did the same for you, who I believe have got but little by their project? for my part I will throw in my Poor Mite to help itt forward, and if you succeed in itt I'll come abroade againe to serve you too. 'Twas very unfortunate your being soe hasty in the Union; for if your Servants here abroade had all alike stood their ground, there had not by this been a New Companys man in the Land of the Liveing in these parts. Att this

[1] Hedges 3. 103.

time my Intentions are to come upon the Tankerville, and if I stay till this time twelve month, 'tis purely on your account, by which time your Bottome will be wound up on this Coast."

It is not improbable that he would have come home as suggested in this letter if it had not been for the death of Aurungzeb, which took place on the 21st of February 1707. In an earlier letter to his son Robert he had written[1]: "I can think of nothing to hinder my coming unless it be some extraordinary news from England or great confusion caused by the death of the King of this country, in which case I could not with honour allow the government of this place or Fort St. David fall into the hands of Fraser and such as are here." This contingency having arisen, he could not with honour have left his post. At this crisis no one could be better qualified than he was, or more unfit than Fraser, to conduct with Aurungzeb's successor, Shah Aulum, the negotiations on behalf of the Company for the confirmation and extension of the privileges already granted to the English in Madras. These negotiations gave him little difficulty, and, as will be shown, were eminently satisfactory. But in the internal affairs of the settlement and the management of his official staff he never had a more troublesome time during the whole of his Governorship than that which now awaited him. If his patience was nearly exhausted, so also was that of some of his colleagues, whose promotion depended on his retirement. He had already remained in office longer than any previous Governor; and his relations during the last few years with Fraser, which were notorious alike amongst the European and native communities at Fort St George, had become intolerable, and were such that they might at any time bring about a serious official

[1] Dropmore I. 18.

catastrophe. In his letters to his firm friend, Sir Thomas Cook, the Governor of the United Company, and to William Hewer, he had warned them more than once of the inevitable mischief to the Company that must arise from the employment of fools and knaves as their servants, and promoting them according to their seniority over the heads of better men[1]. The time was now at hand when the evil consequences of the persistence of the Court in this disastrous policy were to be brought home to them in a very unpleasant fashion.

[1] Hedges 3. 103.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE RIGHT AND LEFT HAND CASTES

THE Hindu population of Black Town had been attracted thither for one common purpose, the making of their livelihood out of the European trade. In this they had succeeded. In course of time most of them had come to appreciate the immunity which they enjoyed there from the exactions and tyranny of the native rulers, and very few can have wished to leave the settlement. But they were by no means disposed to live together in unity. Apart from the inevitable mutual jealousies that arose from many of them being trade competitors, serious dissensions had occurred from time to time amongst them by reason of their hereditary and traditional animosities. They were divided into two main factions, the Right and Left Hand Castes, the members of which were as ready to fall out with one another on the smallest provocation as Orangemen and Ribbonmen were in Ireland or the Montagues and Capulets in Verona. The Right Hand Caste occupied the higher social position. It included most of the agricultural tribesmen, and had the support of the pariahs, who prided themselves on being its allies[1]. The Left Hand Caste, whom it looked down upon, seems to have consisted mainly of members of the manufacturing and trading tribes. The antagonism of the two factions had its foundation in religious

[1] Hedges 3. 110.

differences; but was fomented by the claims of the Right Hand Caste to certain exclusive privileges and prerogatives, which the Left Hand Caste was unwilling to recognise. As far back as 1652, during the Governorship of Sir William Langhorne, faction fights were frequent[1]; and an attempt had been made to check them by assigning separate quarters in the town to the two parties. Express orders had been given that the weddings and burials of each caste, which were the most frequent excuses for the outburst of hostilities, should be held exclusively in the streets then allocated to that caste. Unfortunately these orders had not been systematically and rigidly enforced, and there were certain streets in the town in which the houses had continued to be occupied by members of both castes. It was in these streets that the faction fights most frequently occurred.

The immediate cause of the serious quarrel between the two factions, that took place towards the end of Thomas Pitt's Governorship, seems to have been a change which he had made in accordance with the wishes of the Court of the United Company in the system of buying and selling the Company's goods. Up to that time it had been the practice to procure the Company's goods through the agency of native brokers or merchants, who contracted to supply them according to sample, and who received dadni, or advance money, for payment of the wages of the weavers or others employed in the manufacture. In the earlier days of the Presidency, before the credit of the Company was firmly established, this was practically the only way in which the orders of the Court to send home any particular goods they might require could be executed. The brokers and merchants who entered into these contracts had been for the most part members of the Right Hand Caste.

[1] Wheeler 2. 53.

Some of them, Casa Verona, for example, had made enormous fortunes out of them, and were suspected of having paid large subsidies to some of the earlier Governors for the exclusive privilege of selling to the Company and buying the Company's goods. The Court were now anxious to put an end to this system, by encouraging all classes of merchants to bring in their own goods for sale and to compete with one another in the mart at the Sea Gate, giving the Company's factors the opportunity of examining and selecting the goods that seemed the best and cheapest, and haggling with the competing vendors. In other words, they wished to break down the ring of brokers, and to give all the native merchants an equal chance in the open market; by which means they hoped to obtain a greater variety of goods than formerly and at lower prices. That it was this change of policy, whether suggested by Pitt or not, which was the immediate cause of the outbreak of the smouldering antagonism of the two castes which gave the Governor so much trouble and was ultimately made the ostensible excuse for his dismissal seems clear from the following extract from a letter from him to Sir Edmund Harrison in December 1707 after the riots had been put down[1]:

"You will see," he writes, "the troubles we have had between 2 sects of our Inhabitants, distinguished by the names of Right and Left Hand Castes. The former had layd a design deep and black, utterly to extirpatt the other out of this City, and that they might the more effectually compass their ends, some of the heads of the Left Hand Caste were to be murder'd, which would have put such a consternation upon the rest, that not one would have remain'd with us. The grounds of these dissentions, and what lead the Right Hand Caste into this hellish conspiracy I find to be that it had firmly been praktis'd among 'em that the Left Hand Cast could not make any bargains or buy any goods unless one of the Right hand were Join'd with 'em to direct their Shairs, so that they govern'd the trade as they thought

[1] Hedges 3. 113.

fit, and the Companys Investment fell generally under their management, who would never enter into any contracts of providing goods without advancing money to 'em,—to break the neck of which (sometime before the Company had order'd us the method wee now took) I put up papers upon the sea gate and other publick places, to encourage all merchants indifferently to bring in goods to be Sorted by the Companys musters, and wou'd agree the Price and pay 'em ready money for 'em, but this tryall had not the effect I desir'd. The Left Hand Cast (who are the only merchants that can serve you in this method) being intimidated by the threats of the Right, and overaw'd by 'em, and upon receiving your order to advance no money or payment upon Investments I took care to publish it among 'em, and that we could not recede from the directions you had given us, upon which some of the most eminent Merchants of the Left, prevail'd upon by the assurance of our protecting and defending 'em against the insults of the other, undertook the providing goods in the manner you direct (and indeed none else could have done it) upon which the Right Hand upon seeing their designs defeated, and that the reigns of trade was no longer in their hands, fell upon this barbarous attempt to regain it, industriously spreading false rumours amongst the poor and ignorant people to cause 'em to desert us. I have discover'd the heads of the faction, and shall reward 'em according to their deserts."

This letter disposes of the suggestions afterwards made that the disorders which ensued were brought about by the arbitrary conduct of the Governor, unfairly on his own initiative and for his own private ends favouring the Left Hand Caste. The facts are that the reformation in the Company's trade which he had been ordered by the Court to carry out was a very desirable one, and that it could only be effected by his undertaking to protect those members of the Left Hand Caste, who were willing to assist in it, against the insults and attacks of their enemies of the Right Hand Caste, who were determined to resist it. That such protection was necessary very soon became abundantly apparent.

It appears from another letter of the Governor that the rioting between the two castes began towards

the end of June 1707[1], immediately after the sale of the Company's broadcloth to some members of the Left Hand Caste, and the purchase from the latter of some goods under the system of trade now instituted in accordance with the orders of the Court. What happened is thus described by the Governor:

"Two or three hundred men of the Right Hand Cast, rose at Midnight upon the Left Hand who were making a wedding in their own Street, and until'd Some of their houses, but by the Peddanaigue[2] were dispers'd." "Soe complaints came to mee next morning, when I found the Right Hand notorious Egressors, soe punished the Ringleaders, and in Consultation wee order'd that Narran and Surapa for the Right Hand and Colloway and Vincatty for the Left, to whome wee joyn'd the paymaster and Gunner" (should) "Survey their Streets and report what could be convenientest appropriated to the Left Hand Caste to keep their Weddings in, and prevent further disputes, Soe accordingly they mett at the very place severall times, when the beginning of this month" (July) "they were all before us in Consultation, and Reported unanimously that the Left Hand should have two Streets where all their houses were, Soe t'was order'd that the Paymaster should put up Stones at the charge of the Right Hand, with a suitable Inscription to Stint the limitts, which accordingly was done, and all well."

This account of the beginning of the quarrel is substantially confirmed by the entries in the Consultation Book of the 26th June and the 17th of July[3], from which it further appears that "those few of the Right Hand Caste" who were living in the streets assigned to the Left Hand Caste were to sell their houses, and go and live in the streets amongst their

[1] Hedges 3. 109.
[2] Pedda-nayakan, head police officer.
[3] Wheeler 2. 50.

own caste; and that the two streets assigned to the Left Hand Caste were to be "peculiarly appropriated for the Left Hand Caste to pass in at their making their weddings and festivals"; and that none of the Right Hand Caste were to give them the least disturbance in their precinct at their utmost peril. "And it was further ordered that to prevent either Caste from pretending ignorance of these limits, the Paymaster should set up four Stones at the cost of the Left Hand Caste and insert thereon in English and Gentoo the purport of this order."

This decision, which seems to have been unanimously come to by all the members of the Council, gave great umbrage to the Right Hand Caste; and when the stones had been set up in accordance with it, some person or persons unknown in the night of the 12th of August, placed papers on them in the Malabar language to the following effect:

> "Since the foundation of this city no such thing has been known. By the authority of the Government and prevalence of money this Pillar was erected, in contempt and derision of the Right Hand Caste, who will forfeit the rights of their caste, if they do not destroy the others like dogs and tumble them down. If it be demanded by whose order this was written, it is by the will of the King of England and the Company, who will not fail to bring these things to pass; and this by way of caution."

On the day after the discovery of these seditious notices the heads of the Right Hand Caste were sent for by the Council and charged with having had a hand in them, which they denied. They were given a month's notice to find out the delinquents, and informed that if they failed to discover them they would be fined such a sum of money as the Governor and Council might think fit.

Three days afterwards, on the 17th of August, the Right Hand Caste went with great pomp with a wedding through one of the prohibited streets, on

hearing of which the Governor sent out a party of soldiers, who seized nineteen of them, and brought them as prisoners into the Choultry gaol.

On the 19th of August the Governor summoned a Council and informed his colleagues of what had been done. On the same day a large body of representatives of the Right Hand Caste came to the fort, and presented a petition, in which it was alleged that the two streets, in which the stones had been put up, had on the first settlement of the fort been exclusively inhabited by the Right Hand Caste, until the French troubles at St Thomé during the Governorship of Sir William Langhorne, at which time several of the immigrants from St Thomé had without the knowledge or permission of the Government built their houses one amongst the other within the quarters of the Right Hand Caste,

"which," to quote from the petition, "being complained of to Sir William Langhorn, and the ill effects of the falling out of the two Castes being taken into consideration, it was ordered that they should not live together; but that the Right Hand people should go to the place that was first granted to them to inhabit, and that the Left Hand should go to theirs. Accordingly to which order the Right Hand people did obey, and likewise some of the Left Hand people; but others did desire leave to stay till the rains was over, which was granted, but after to retire to their own streets; which to this day they have not done, but rather have encroached more upon your Petitioners' property. Likewise the Weddings that were made by the Left Hand people that lived amongst your Petitioners, were ordered to be kept always in their own streets; but if it happened that they did make any Weddings in your Petitioners' streets, it was ordered to be done privately in their own houses, without any music or any such ceremony. But they now very unreasonably desire your Petitioners' Streets which was never done before; and they having complained to your Honour, but on what account or reason we do not know. Now in the Streets wherein the Stones were erected, there are one hundred of your Petitioners' houses, with several Wells, Churches, Gardens and Choultries; all which belong to your Petitioners, the Right Hand people. Being very many, being twenty one Castes in

all of these people, we cannot tell every one's mind. The country people have sent letters to us, but what they can do for us we do not know. We all living under your Honour's protection, are afraid to disoblige your Honour, therefore stay very quiet. From the beginning of the world to this day it was never known that any Government did take away your Petitioners' streets, and give them to the Left Caste people, which they know to be true. Now they having made many false complaints to your Honour, which is the occasion of all this trouble; for the Streets wherein the Stones are erected are the first streets of the Right Hand Castes for all strangers that come from the country. For these streets your Honour has given to the Left Hand Castes is a very great dissatisfaction to all the Right Hand Caste People."

Up to the day when this petition was presented Fraser seems to have acquiesced in the previous decisions of the Governor and Council in this matter. "He had joyn'd with us," the Governor writes, "in every little that was done, nay, I may say forwarder than myselfe[1]." But now he had changed his mind; and at this Council meeting, just before the presentation of the petition, he posed as the champion of the Right Hand Caste. "He begun," the Governor writes,

"a long Speach, which you may remember I seldome hearken to, but as providence would have it, I did to this, and as soon as he had done it wee were told that the Right Hand Cast was at the door with a Petition who were presently call'd in, and as usuall 'twas read, which prov'd to be the purport of Frasier's speach, Soe I that minet charg'd him with having made it or read it, which he deny'd with confusion. Two days after the boatmen, washermen, Barbers, Cooleys Parriars &ca deserted us, this made us not a little jealous that Ffrasier had betray'd our Councils, upon which wee suspended him the Service."

A detailed account of the meeting of the Council at which Fraser was suspended is given in the Consultation Book of the 22nd of August. Some of the passages in it bear unmistakable internal evidence of their having been composed by the Governor. It states that the Governor had summoned all the Council except Mr Fraser, whom he suspected of

[1] Hedges 3. 111.

having betrayed them in what they had done in the settlement of the dispute between the two castes. The Governor, the account says[1],

"gave us this instance of it. That when on the 19th past, he acquainted the Board of the insolence of the Pariahs, who went through the Left Hand Streets with a Wedding, and what he had done thereon; when immediately Mr. Fraser according to his custom made a long senseless speech, the purport showing that he was now against what had been transacted in Consultation about the Castes; which no notice was taken of as coming from him. But then the next minute the Right Hand Caste delivered their Petition, which was presently read, and entirely agreed with the purport of what just before Mr. Fraser spoke. When the Governor immediately charged him with making or reading of it which he then denied in great confusion, and the same was taken notice of by Messrs. Raworth and Frederick present in Council. So the Governor laying before the Board the worst of consequences that might attend the Company's affairs, as well as our own persons, to have one amongst us to betray our counsels; of which the Council being equally sensible, desired Mr. Fraser might be sent for; which was accordingly done. When he was charged with what before mentioned, and told by the Governor that it was impossible he could make a speech so coherent with a Petition that was just after delivered in, without having made or read it; to which he made no other defence than that we should prove it if we could. The Governor at the same time charged him with directing the Malabar inscription that was put upon the Stones, which he denied with strange asseveration and execrations, but to the making or reading of the petition only a plain denial. So after he told us he had no more to say in his defence, the Governor desired him to withdraw, which he refused to do, but afterwards obliged him to it.

When we debated the nature of his offence and the ill consequences of any of the Council encouraging Petitions against our proceedings in general, or such in particular as he himself seemingly agreed to, without the least hesitation to anything that was done relating to the Castes—the Governor to prevent his doing further mischief pressed the necessity of his being suspended ab officio et beneficio; alleging that no inconveniency could accrue from it, for that his abilities were so little considerable, that all of us knew in our consciences that he never merited rice and water from the Company; but yet with his malice pride and envy, he has often made strange progress in

[1] Wheeler 2. 55.

mischief, and wholly incapable of doing good. And it is not amiss to insert one or two passages, though foreign to this present matter. Some time past, upon a suspicion that there was a difference between the Governor and Mr. Raworth, an impudent Dubash, that was often trusted with Mr. Fraser's whispers, came up to Mr. Raworth in his chamber, and told him that he heard there was a difference between the Governor and him; that he treated him as he did others; but if he would stand against him and come and join with Mr. Fraser and his party, he was sure they would be able to suppress him; upon which Mr. Raworth treated him as became him by kicking him downstairs." "That whenever the Governor has frowned upon any one for crimes and misdemeanours, whether white men or black, it is well known that they were always cherished by Mr. Fraser; who has been the pest of the Government as well as the ridicule and scum of the place. Yet, notwithstanding all before mentioned is well known to be great truths to every man that sits upon the Board, who desired the Governor to leave him out at the last sorting Summons, for that he was so impertinent and troublesome that no business could be done; yet they were generally unwilling to suspend him the service, till the Governor solemnly avowed that he would sit no more with him in Council, nor give his opinion in any affairs more of the Company's where he was present; which induced the Council unanimously to suspend him the Company's service officio et beneficio till their pleasure was known in this matter; which the Secretary is ordered to acquaint himself therewith, and that wee will give him a copy of what wee write home to the Company relating to him, that so his defence and answer may go therewith."

Three days after Fraser's suspension, the Governor summoned a meeting of twelve of the principal heads of the two castes, and shut them up in a room at the fort[1], to see whether they could not come to some agreement with reference to the matters in dispute. In a few hours they came to terms with one another, and submitted an agreement which they were all prepared to sign. It provided that one of the two streets which had recently been assigned to the Left Hand Caste should be handed over to the Right Hand Caste, and that the Left Hand Caste should remain in undisputed possession of the other

[1] Wheeler 2. 60—82.

street, on condition that the boatmen, lascars and fishermen living there should be allowed to remain in the houses occupied by them, provided that they did not offer any molestation to the Left Hand Caste, and that the inscription on the stones which had been set up were erased. This arrangement, which was a great concession to the Right Hand Caste, being desired by the heads of both castes, the Governor and Council assented to it, on the understanding that the representatives of the Right Hand Caste, who had entered into it, would undertake to inform their supporters, who had left the city, of its purport in order to induce them to return. As a further inducement the Governor on the 29th of August published a General Pardon to such of the deserters as might return before the 10th of September. Very few having come back, the Armenians, Persians and Patans residing in the city, came in a body of fifty or sixty to the fort and tendered their services to the Governor as mediators, and their offer having been accepted they went to St Thomé with this object on the 16th of September. Before they started, a Gasbardar or messenger came from St Thomé, who had been sent by the Nawab to turn out the Governor there, and to put in a new one. Being admitted to a conference with the Governor, he expressed himself concerned at the troubles of the two castes, which he said were frequent in the country, and sometimes grew to such a pitch that the Native Government found a great deal of difficulty in quelling them; and he explained that the continuance of the present troubles was not due to the inhabitants of St Thomé, but to the Governor's own people who remained in the town, who not only gave the deserters their directions, but also sent them their subsistence. He added: "You are likewise betrayed by some that sit at this Table," and being asked what he meant,

said that the day before, when talking with three of the heads of the castes they had told him that the Second of the Council (Fraser) was on their side; and that they would not return on any terms, unless he was reinstated in the Company's service; but that if he would come they would meet him anywhere, and return with him without insisting on any pardon; for that they were assured that he was their friend and had never consented to what the Governor and Council had done in favour of the Left Hand Caste, which belief had gained him such a reputation amongst the mob, that they went up and down the street in his hearing crying out "Chinna Captain," "Chinna Captain," which implied in their language the Second in Command.

On the following day the Governor summoned another meeting of the Council, and informed them of what the Gasbardar had told him, which was confirmed by the confession of three of the heads of the Right Hand Caste, who stated that on accompanying some of the Armenians and Persians who had gone to St Thomé the day before in order to accommodate the differences, they were stopped at the gate by the mob, heard cries for the Chinna Captain, and were asked why he did not come, for nothing could be done towards their return without him. They also informed the Council that the leaders of the Right Hand Caste at St Thomé had written to several members of their caste at Fort St George, threatening their lives and to turn them out of their caste if they did not come and join them, which much intimidated some of the poorer people, though not the men of substance, who had written to the deserters to tell them that they were satisfied in all matters relating to their caste, and that therefore any ill consequences that might attend the continuance of further disputes must lie at the doors

of the malcontents. The messenger who had taken this letter arrived in the course of the meeting, and reported that the deserters had returned no answer to it in writing, but that they had sent word by him that they would accept no Cowle that was not signed by Fraser, and that the stones which had been put up must be brought to St Thomé or put into the Pagoda. Upon which Fraser was sent for, and the Governor charged him with being at the bottom of the whole business. "To which," to quote from the Consultation Book, "he answered that it was all a grand suppose and flatly denied all." He was then ordered to withdraw, and it was unanimously agreed that as he was preparing to move out of his lodgings to a house in the town, he should be stopped from doing so, and confined for the present in the fort, and that no one should be allowed to hold discourse with him, except in the presence of the sentinel. Orders were given to the captain of the guard to see that this was done.

About a week afterwards the refractory members of the Right Hand Caste seemed to have made up their minds to return, for they came out of St Thomé all together at about nine o'clock in the morning. But when they had nearly reached the town, they changed their minds, and returned to St Thomé. The Governor then made preparations to attack them; but refrained from doing so at the request of the Armenians and Persians, and on hearing that the new Governor of St Thomé would arrive in the course of a few hours. The new Governor on his arrival seems to have been very anxious to get rid of the mob; and on the 4th of October he brought them all back. Their leaders appeared before the Governor and were dismissed to their habitations, with assurances that their pardon should be kept inviolable. This ended the whole trouble. A suitable present, consisting of four pieces of broadcloth, a piece of

serge, four swords, one pair of pistols, six pairs of spectacles, some knives, penknives, and looking glasses, was made to the Governor of St Thomé for his services in the matter; and Fraser was released from his confinement.

On a review of these unfortunate occurrences, it is clear that the position of the Governor throughout was one of great difficulty. In one of his letters home he writes: "I must say this much. I never mett with Soe knotty a villany in my life, nor ever with anything that gave me soe much trouble and perplexity as this has done[1]." Confronted by the suspicion, which in his mind and those of his colleagues amounted to a certainty, that Fraser was acting in treacherous collusion with the Right Hand Caste, it would have been madness to have allowed him to continue to attend the deliberations of the Council. And when the mob at St Thomé openly and tumultuously avowed that they would not return to the city except upon terms to be approved by Fraser, and Fraser was himself making preparations to leave his quarters in the fort, the only possible course open to the Governor and his Council was to confine him there and keep him under close supervision. It appears from the Consultation Book[2], that the Council were unanimous in coming to this decision and that after it had been carried into effect the rioters never so much as mentioned Fraser's name again. Criticism of the details of the proceedings taken by those in authority in times of danger and perplexity is always easy after the event. But in the main lines of his action in this emergency the Governor was clearly right; and his success was indisputable. Without bloodshed or any act of violence, in spite of the treachery of his second in command and the opposition of the Right Hand Caste, who were far

[1] Hedges 3. 111. [2] Wheeler 2. 72.

more powerful than their opponents, he succeeded in carrying out the very salutary reformation of the Company's trade which the Court had ordered. Nor can it be said that he displayed any undue vindictiveness to Fraser notwithstanding his personal hatred of the man. "We were mercifull," he truly says in a letter to his son, "in not hanging of him[1]." Fraser was in fact released from his confinement as soon as the troubles were over. Without the explicit orders of the Court it was impossible to remove his suspension, even if it had been desirable to do so. Nor would any power on earth have induced the Governor to sit again in Council with him. This he made quite clear to the Court. Writing home in the midst of the business to one of them, he says of Fraser: "I think there is not such a Wretch in the world for Mischeife and Compassing Confusion; and this is a Saint of the New Company's." "Should they reinstate him, he should never sit with me, let their orders be what it will, therefore I beg of you and all other of my ffriends that if they insist upon restoreing him, that you'le all vote to turne me out, for noe power whatever Shall ever enjoyne me to set with him againe[2]." Few will be disposed to question the propriety of this decision.

[1] Dropmore I. 32. [2] Hedges 3. 112

# CHAPTER XX

## NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE MOGUL

Nearly two years passed after the return of the malcontents of the Right Hand Caste from St Thomé before the decision of the Court on the suspension of Fraser from the Company's service at Fort St George. During the interval the Governor was engaged in important and successful diplomatic negotiations with the high officials of the Imperial Court for the confirmation and enlargement of the Company's privileges and territory in the Carnatic. The disastrous results of the embassy of Sir William Norris had until then deterred the Company's servants in all parts of India from making any serious attempts to enter into direct communications with the Mogul, and had compelled them to content themselves with what minor concessions they could get from the local Nawabs. Owing to the great uncertainty of what would happen on the death of Aurungzeb, Governor Pitt, when Norris was starting for the Mogul's camp, had expressed his surprise that it had been thought worth while to go to so much trouble and expense, in the hope of obtaining from a dying Emperor privileges which his successors would not hesitate to revoke, if it suited their convenience to do so, and which they certainly would not continue without renewed payments to them. Aurungzeb had lived on longer than had been expected, but had at last died in the early part of 1707.

By his will he had directed that his Empire should be divided between his three sons. The eldest, Shah Aulum, who up to this time had been ruling as Governor of Cabul, was left the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the Empire, with Delhi for his capital. To Azim Shah, the second son, were assigned the Southern and South-Western Provinces, including the Deccan, but exclusive of Golconda and Bijapoor, which were left to the third son, Kam Buksh. Each of the three sons aspired to reign over the whole Empire. The two eldest promptly waged war against one another, and their armies fought a great battle at Agra, in which Azim was defeated and slain. In the meanwhile Kam Buksh had seized the whole of the Deccan, and he now refused to come to terms with his victorious elder brother. Whilst the war that ensued was still proceeding, its issue uncertain, overtures came to Governor Pitt from the officers of Shah Aulum, who seem to have recognised the importance of enlisting his services at this juncture. It was not unlikely that Kam Buksh, if defeated in the coming campaign, would retreat to the coast and endeavour to save himself from the vengeance of his brother by escaping on board of one of the English ships. This his brother was anxious to prevent, and was quite willing to grant substantial privileges to the Governor of Fort St George if he would co-operate with him to avert this catastrophe. That this was the main motive which induced his officers to approach Pitt may be inferred from the following letter, which the Governor received from Shah Aulum himself some months afterwards, when the negotiations were on the eve of completion[1]. "Let the chosen of his Caste and Nation, the Governor of Chinnapatam," this letter says, "know that he may be in hopes of

[1] Wheeler 2. 107.

the King's favour. Seeing that Kam Buksh doth purpose to fly from the powerful arms of our victorious army; for that reason the command of the sovereign of the world, worthy of all submission and obedience is issued forth: that in case he, Kam Buksh, should come wandering, not knowing where to go, into those parts, and desire to embark himself on some ship in order to get away; that the chosen of his nation shall use his utmost endeavours to procure that he shall be either killed or made a prisoner, and to effect this, let him know that the command from the Royal Throne is strict in the strictest manner. Written the 17th of the moon Ramazan the Blessed in the second year of the King's Reign." In justice to the Governor, we must bear in mind that although it is probable that the King and his officers from the first proposed to utilise him after this fashion, they seem to have refrained from giving him any intimation of their intention to impose this very unpleasant duty upon him until the negotiations had gone too far for him to recede from them. Fortunately for all parties, it never became necessary to carry the fratricidal mandate into execution. For Kam Buksh died of wounds he received in his first battle with Shah Aulum's army at Hyderabad in January 1709.

Among the Mogul's chief advisers were Zulfikar Khan, late Commander-in-Chief of Aurungzeb's army, Assad Khan, Aurungzeb's Grand Vizier, and Zoodee Khan, whom Shah Aulum had made Lord High Steward of the Imperial Household. With all three Governor Pitt had long been on friendly terms. He knew their characters, abilities and antecedents; and they knew his. By a fortunate accident, a wife of Zoodee Khan happened to be staying at this time at St Thomé, presumably for the purposes of her health. It was therefore possible for the Governor to be of service to her. It was

probably this consideration which led to the negotiations being commenced by Zoodee Khan, who wrote to Pitt, "professing great kindness and tendering his service in any affair[1]." The Governor contented himself in the first instance with a request that Shah Aulum would confirm the privileges granted by his father to the English. On the 31st of July 1708 he received the following reply:

"The Governor of Chinnapatam may depend upon His Majesty's Royal Favour. The good and faithful services you have done his Majesty's subjects has been represented to him by some of his Chief Ministers of State, upon whose recommendation of your merits, a mark of his favour to you, he has ordered this Hosbulhookum to be sent you to certify the same; not doubting but your deportment will continue to be such as to increase in fame and reputation; and according as you observe this Hosbulhookum you may expect further marks of his Majesty's grace and countenance[2]."

On receiving this gracious message the Governor at once summoned the Council and most of the Company's servants, with the principal European inhabitants of Fort St George, to accompany him to the Company's garden, where he was met by all the Armenians, Persians, Patans, and leading Hindu merchants of the city. He communicated the contents of the letter to them; and celebrated the occasion with the firing of salvoes of artillery, the ringing of bells and other customary manifestations of public rejoicing.

A week later it was decided in Council as an appropriate compliment in appreciation of her husband's services in this affair to send Zoodee Khan's lady at St Thomé a present valued at from 120 to 130 pagodas consisting of rosewater, Persian fruit, filagree work of Manilla and a piece of Persian cloth of gold. Hearing shortly afterwards from messengers of Zoodee Khan that she was greatly in

[1] Wheeler 2. 95. [2] Wheeler 2. 96.

want of money and would be glad of a loan of 500 pagodas, because she was not able to get bills from her husband, who could not remit them by reason of the troublous state of the country, it was arranged to lend her the sum asked for, to be repaid in four months' time without interest.

On the 7th of August the following entry occurs in the Consultation Book:

"The purport of the Hosbulhookum from Shah Aulum seems to invite us to make our addresses to the King for a continuation of our privileges; which opportunity we resolving to take hold of, believing we shall accomplish it for a much less" (cost) "to the Company, than if we defer it till the contests between the brothers are over: wherefore it is agreed that the Governor draws out a petition to the King, a letter to the Grand Vizier, and another to Zoodee Khan, and lay them before the Council for their advice therein."

It would seem from this entry that the general expectation of the Council was that Shah Aulum would be the victor in the coming campaign. In accordance with their wishes, the Governor during the next few days set himself to work to employ to the best of his ability what he has on another occasion described as his "talent for writing." Six days later he submitted the results of his labours for the approval of his colleagues.

They consisted of four petitions, one to Shah Aulum himself; one to his Grand Vizier; one to Zulfikar Khan; and one to Zoodee Khan[1]. All of them are interesting samples of the diplomatic correspondence of those days between the Company's servants and the native rulers of India. The first three were in general terms, couched in the customary fulsome professions of obsequious deference, humbly thanking the great men to whom they were addressed for past benefits and entreating a continuance of

[1] Wheeler 2. 97—101.

their gracious favour. The following is a translation of the petition to the Mogul:

"God grant the great King Shah Aulum may live for ever, is the hearty Prayers of the Governor of Chinnapatam and of all the English Nation in Your Majesty's Dominion, who have been here lately blessed with Your Majesty's most Gracious and Royal Hosbulhookum: and for Your Majesty's commands therein, they shall always be kept as sacred as they were in the time of Your Majesty's Royal Predecessors, who were pleased to bestow their Royal favours on us in granting us several Privileges to encourage us in our trade; for a confirmation of which we humbly Petition your Majesty to grant us your Royal Firmaun, with what additional favours your Majesty in your Royal Wisdom shall think fit: which we shall not only record in our books, but in our hearts also: and as in duty bound shall ever pray for your Majesty's long and prosperous reign, and that you may always be so victorious as to lay your foot on the neck of your enemies."

The second petition was addressed "To His Highness Khan Khanan" (the Khan of Khans) "Bahawdee Zephir Jung Grand Vizier," and was thus worded:

"Your Highnesses noble qualifications and virtues being known to all the world, which increase by your daily giving instances of your justice and mercy, and particularly your favours and protection, which you so liberally bestow on all strangers in your King's dominions: of which we here have a late instance in receiving the blessing of his Majesty's Royal Hosbulhookum: which we must attribute to your Highness's favour and great care of us: for which we return our most humble thanks: and humbly request that as we now send our Petition to the Great King Shah Aulum, humbly desiring his royal Firmaun for a confirmation of our privileges according to Sallabad throughout his dominions: that your Highness would be pleased to countenance and assist us in procuring the same: for which you shall not only find us grateful but dutiful: and shall always pray for your Highness's health and prosperity, and for ever to be blest with the favour of your Great King."

The petition to Zulfikar Khan, who when Nawab of the Carnatic, during the Governorship of Elihu Yale, had conferred the existing privileges possessed by the Company at Fort St George, and had been

paid 10,000 pagodas for his services on that occasion, was as follows :

"The many obligations we lie under to your Highness are never to be forgotten, being rivetted in our memories as well as recorded in our books ; which we should have often acknowledged but prevented by the great distance and troubles of the country ; yet nevertheless we never failed to enquire after your Highness's health, which God continue.

Your Highness is well acquainted with the privileges our nation enjoyed in the reign of the great Aurungzebe of blessed memory ; which we are endeavouring to get confirmed by a royal Firmaun from the great King Shah Aulum ; that we and our trade may go on in all parts according to Sallabad ; to effect which we humbly petition that your Highness will continue your constant favours to us in speaking in our behalves as an opportunity presents, for which we shall be always grateful, and pray for your Highness's health and prosperity."

In his petition to Zoodee Khan, his go-between, the Governor is more specific. He begins by proffering the same excuse for omitting to send the usual complimentary presents to the Emperor and his high officials as that which Zoodee Khan had himself lately pleaded for not sending money to his wife, viz. the troublous state of the country. He clearly explains after a businesslike fashion the different concessions that he wishes Zoodee Khan to obtain for him ; and inquires what presents will be most acceptable to the great men at Court, and to whom it will be necessary to give them, in effect seeks to be informed what price he will have to pay, whilst at the same time he pleads that the losses which have recently fallen on his settlement will render it impossible for him to give so much as he would otherwise have been pleased to do. The following is the text of this, the most important letter of the four :

"To His Excellency Zoodee Khan Lord High Steward of the King's Household.

It is your noble and generous mind that have drawn this trouble of our application to you ; and as I wrote you in my

last Letter, which I delivered Aga Makeem, I now send you our Humble Petition to the King and Address to the Grand Vizier; copies of which I here enclose to Your Excellency: humbly requesting that you will favour us with the management thereof.

We are not ignorant of what should accompany such Petitions and Addresses; but the hasards and troubles in the way prevent us from performing that part at present: in which I humbly desire your Excellency's advice and direction as to what would be acceptable to his Majesty, the Grand Vizier, and such others where you think it is necessary; and we shall endeavour to procure it, if possible.

Your Excellency will see that we desire a Firmaun to confirm our privileges according to Sallabad in all his dominions; unless his Majesty shall, out of his Royal bounty, bestow some new favours on us. Your Excellency cannot but know that Miliapore" (St Thomé) "is a troublesome neighbourhood to us, creating always disputes and quarrels, of little advantage to the King nor will it ever be more; which could we obtain, and the town of Trivatore on the other side of us, it would make us easy and increase the riches of the King's country.

And whereas the goods we import are generally carried to the capital cities of Golconda and Bijapor, etc., which trade we should much increase, if there was no custom paid upon them between this place and those cities; and that the Mettas about us, which of late years have been increased to the plague and ruin of trade, were laid aside; which only find employs for some little people, who destroy trade by their vexation and extortion, and in the main very much lessen the King's revenue.

And we humbly desire that you would get it inserted in a Firmaun that whenever we are so unfortunate as to lose a ship in any part of his Majesty's dominions, we shall have the liberty to preserve what we can of the wreck, without any molestation from the Government; which is not only practised throughout the world, but the inhabitants are generally commanded to assist therein. For it is a great hardship that, after the great risk that our people have run of their lives, they shall not be at liberty to save what they can of their estates. We must own with great thankfulness that this justice have been granted us by former purwannas from Khan Bahadur and the present Nabob" (Daud Khan); "but as it has been formerly disputed, it may again, which nothing but the King's gracious grant can prevent.

We extremely want the King's blessing and favours to give new life to our trade; for since your Excellency went

hence this place has lost nearly three lakks of Pagodas by misfortune and most by pirates; so that it has become poor; and nothing can contribute to the retrieving our losses but God's blessing, the King's favour, and Your Excellency's continuance in assisting of us.

Here are ships in a few days that will depart for Pegu, when we shall write to the King what you advised in your former letter, that an Ambassador was coming to him. Khan Bahadur always showed himself a friend to our nation; whose favours we cannot but retain with great thankfulness; so have wrote him a letter which comes herewith, and a copy of it for your Excellency; we leave it to your pleasure whether it shall be delivered to him.

If please God we are so fortunate as to be blessed with the King's favour, as to obtain his Royal Firmaun, we humbly entreat Your Excellency to appoint some able person to see it so fully penned as that it may not admit of any dispute from Nabobs and Governors, where the same is to be executed. Our dependence is entirely on your Excellency's friendship, for which we shall be always full of acknowledgments, and heartily wish Your Excellency and all your family health and prosperity."

It would be difficult to set out more clearly and concisely than is done in this letter the considerations which in the mind of the writer made the enlargement of the Company's settlement at Fort St George and the reduction of the inland custom duties on English goods as desirable in the interests of the Mogul's government as they were in those of the English traders. It is not likely that the Governor, when he indited it, was sanguine enough to imagine that the Mogul would at once be willing to give up to him St Thomé, which had been the headquarters of Daud Khan during the late blockade of Fort St George, and having on that occasion enjoyed immunity from bombardment by the Governor's shells, on account of its Portuguese inhabitants and buildings, might possibly with advantage be so utilised again, if necessary. But in dealing with Easterns it was so customary to begin with asking for more and offering less than was likely to be given or accepted, that it would have been contrary to the

immemorial usage of the country if he had not in the forefront of his letter asked for something that he had no immediate expectation of receiving. Nor could any time have been more opportune for making the request than now, when the native Governor of St Thomé was amicably disposed towards him, and had been put to great inconvenience by the riotous proceedings of the rebellious malcontents of the Right Hand Caste, who had swarmed from Fort St George into his town, and had with great difficulty been persuaded to leave it. After all, St Thomé was of far greater value to the Company than to the Mogul; and there was no good reason why it should not some day be ceded to them, if they proved themselves serviceable allies of the Imperial Government. A time might come when the Mogul, hard pressed for money or other assistance, would be prepared to part with it on reasonable terms; and no harm could be done by broaching the question of its assignment to the English now. With the wishes of the English traders in regard to wrecks and the reduction of the inland duties levied on their goods the Imperial officials must have been familiar, and there was no insuperable reason for not acceding to the Governor's requests in either of these respects. Nor were there the same grounds for hesitating to allow the Governor to expand his boundaries on the northern side of Blacktown, by the absorption of the adjoining townships, as there were for declining to give up St Thomé to him. These townships he might not unreasonably hope would be ceded to him. As a matter of fact he got them earlier than might have been expected[1]. For in the month following the despatch of his letters to the Mogul, hearing that his old friend Daud Khan was about to proceed to join Shah Aulum at Golconda

[1] Wheeler 2. 103.

in the coming contest with Kam Buksh, he very judiciously send Daud a present of 200 pagodas. Never was money better spent; for he received in return a Perwanna for Trivatore and four other adjoining townships, the five being valued at 1500 pagodas. Subsequently the Mogul's officers at St Thomé declared that they had been undervalued and that their real value was 3000 pagodas, on which report Daud Khan ordered the Mogul's books to be laid before him. This difficulty seems however to have been surmounted by the promptitude with which the Governor at once sent 200 pagodas to be distributed amongst the native officials who kept the records. A month afterwards the following entry appears in the Consultation Book:

> "Saturday 16th October. We having large experience that it is impossible for us to manage the income of villages, so as not to be imposed upon and lose at least half the produce; to prevent which it is agreed this day to let or to rent the five villages, lately given the Company by the Nabob, for twelve years to Collowat and Vinketty Chetties, at 1200 pagodas per annum, to commence from this day; who are obliged to repair all tanks belonging thereto, which have been let run to ruin, as customary, by those who have lately been the renters of them; and the Secretary is ordered to draw out a lease for them."

It would appear from this entry that in return for an expenditure of 400 pagodas of the Company's money Governor Pitt not only obtained the five townships which he required for the expansion of his settlement, but let them a month afterwards on a twelve years' lease at an annual rent of 1200 pagodas. It is very unlikely that Daud Khan would have ventured to cede them to the Company if he had not received peremptory orders to do so from the Mogul, who was evidently inclined to be most friendly. Nor was this the only manifestation of Shah Aulum's good-will towards the English. Writing to his son

Robert, the Governor says: "The favours from the present Great Mogull are without a president. I had two vests from him, and the honour of severall letters, and a phirmaund under his greate seale, made up in a paper under his privy seale, wherein he tenders mee the command of five thousand horse, and to have the pay without doeing service. And wee of all Europeans were the only favourites: the Dutch at the same time were put out of Golcunda[1]."

The presents he sent home to his son's wife in the following year, as appears from another letter to his son, in which he writes: "I have sent home several things for presents. The parcell in wax cloth is for your wife, being King Shaalum's tasheriff to me, a coat, sash and girdle and a chint bed for her: all are the finest procurable[2]." In the meanwhile he had written to Zoodee Khan the following letter[3]:

"To Zoodee Khan Lord High Steward of King Shah Aulum's Household, January 5th, 1709.

By your faithful Chobdar Cossac, by whom Your Excellency sent the Royal Hosbulhookum and Vest and Perwannas I now send this humble address, which doubtless you expected sooner and had been sent but for the two following reasons. Your Excellency enjoining secresy, I was obliged to commit the translating of them to some particular friends, which took up fourteen days. When fully apprised of the purport thereof, I could not but be surprised at your unparallelled expressions of friendship and invaluable honours you have done us; which so confounded my thoughts for some days that I almost despaired of being able to acknowledge them by my pen or otherwise: but then considering what a generous friend I had met with, who had been so lavish of his favours to me who had as little power as merit to oblige you; I could no longer refrain from blessing my stars, who were so propitious to me as to give me the honour of your first acquaintance; which I esteem the happiest fate that had attended me through the whole course of my life; which I shall ever remember, and that posterity may do the same, I humbly request that when you come to Golconda,

[1] Dropmore I. 45.

[2] Dropmore I. 42.

[3] Wheeler 2. 105.

you will honour me with sending me your picture; which I will send to England and have copied by the most exquisite limner in the world, and order it to be sent to me hither; besides I will erect your effigy finely cut in marble with such an inscription on it that the world may know the author of our happiness in these parts....Your Excellency writes that there must be presents for all the princes and some of the great men. If you mean such as are suitable to their birth and qualifications, it is impossible for us to purchase them with our Company's estate; who you know are merchants who run great risk to get a little, and who often meet with loss instead of gain. We hope as the presents we intend are suitable to our circumstances, they will meet with a gracious acceptance from the great king and princes; which puts us in mind of what we read in history that upon many persons making very rich presents to a king, there happened a poor man to come with a drop of water, which was as acceptable as any of their presents, being according to his ability."

The success which had thus far attended his diplomatic efforts encouraged the Governor to go still further. Within a few weeks after the above despatch to Zoodee Khan, Kam Buksh was finally defeated and slain; and as it seemed probable that Shah Aulum would return to Golconda, Governor Pitt seems to have designed to go there himself and enter into personal communications with the Mogul, with a view to obtain additional concessions and finally cement his friendship. "It was expected," he writes home to his son, "that the King, after hee had cutt off his brother Cawne Bux would have stayed at least 6 months at Golcunda, when I myselfe proposed to have went up, though at the expence of my life and fortune, to have procured them such an establishment as the like had not been to any European nation for priviledges and profitt; but the King's return to quell an insurrection in the heart of his country frustrated that design, and am glad it did, for nothing perplexes a man's thoughts more than doeing good and faithfull service for an ungratefull people, as it has been my case with this Company[1]."

[1] Dropmore, I. 45.

The projected expedition here referred to would undoubtedly have been attended with considerable risks, owing to the unsettled state of the country, and the possibility that the Mogul, now that he had attained the main object, which he seems to have had in view in soliciting the services of the English, might, if he had once got the Governor into his hands, have declined to part with him except on unduly onerous conditions. But the Governor, though a cautious man, was apparently prepared to face these risks, relying on his knowledge of the characters and customs of the men with whom he had to deal, of which no one could have been a better judge than himself. No man was more likely than he was to convince the Mogul and his chief officers of the increased revenues which they would obtain if the inland customs duties were remitted, and of the other advantages that might accrue to them if he were placed in a position to control the smaller local rajahs. If, for example, the 5000 horsemen, the command of whom had been placed at his disposal by the Mogul, had been disciplined by a few capable English officers, he could not only have kept the trade routes in that part of India open, but might also have been in a position to give the Mogul very substantial assistance against the Mahrattas, and have anticipated by nearly half a century the preponderating influence which his countrymen were destined to acquire in India by the employment of disciplined native troops. What was however more immediately in his mind was the development of the Company's trade with Golconda, and more particularly the extension of the sale of English broadcloth, and other woollen fabrics, the demand for which had recently been greatly stimulated by the arrival of the Mogul's army at this juncture in these parts. The Governor clearly foresaw that this

demand might be maintained, and possibly increased, if only the trade routes could be made secure, and the inland customs done away with, or reduced to more moderate dimensions. His Parliamentary experience must have made familiar to him the pressure constantly brought to bear upon the supporters of the Company in the House of Commons to induce them to increase the export to India of broadcloth and other woollen fabrics of English manufacture; and with his knowledge of Indian trade he must have realised the difficulty of inducing the Hindu population to buy these goods and the fact that the principal purchasers of them were soldiers and Mahomedans. Now that there seemed an exceptional opportunity of disposing of them more freely than heretofore, he may well have thought it important, whatever the personal risks to himself might be, to take advantage of it. And although the sudden departure of the Mogul himself from this part of his Empire might have delayed any arrangement for securing this very desirable object, there can be little doubt that if his Governorship had been prolonged he would have continued to press the question, and probably with good results, on the attention of his friends, the Mogul's advisers. After he left India nothing more seems to have been attempted in this direction by his successors. The sales of broadcloth and other English fabrics fell off again instead of increasing; and the Court having called on their Council at Fort St George for an explanation, received the following report[1] dated the 14th of October 1712:

"In obedience," the Council write, "to your commands we shall lay before your Honours the best account we can get concerning the Consumption of Broad Cloth and other manufactures in the Mogul's dominions. The coarse red and green broad cloth is chiefly used among the soldiers and ordinary Moormen

[1] Wheeler 2. 190.

for saddles, saddle cloths, sumpture cloth, covers, beds and cushions, for palankeens, carpets to sit upon, mantles to cover them from the rain and sometimes covering for their tents of pleasure. The fine broad cloth as scarlet, aurora, some blue and yellow, is used for the inside of tents for vests or mantles in the rainy season among the great men; covering cloths for the Elephants and hackarys cloth to hang round their drums; for shoulder and waist Belts, scabbards for their swords and Jimdars or daggers; for slippers and for covers, beds and pillows and for palankeens. The embossed cloth is used to hang round the bottom on the inside of the great men's tents three feet high; for spreadings to sit upon, and cushions to lean against; and for cloths to cover the Elephants and horses. Perpetuanos are only used among the meaner sort of people for caps, coats, and covering cloths to sleep on during the rains.

And now that we are upon this subject, we must inform your Honours that at least nine tenths of the Woollen manufactures vended in these parts is among the Moors; the Gentoos making very little or no use of them. The greatest Consumption is in the Mogul's camp, which when at Lahore or Delhi is supplied wholly from Surat and Persia, but when at Agra, partly from Surat and partly from Bengal by way of Patna, from which ports the conveyance to the camp is easy and safe. But what is disposed of hereabouts is dispersed among the Nabob's flying armies in the Carnatta country, Bijapore, and Golcondah, seldom reaching so far as Aurungabad, because the carriage is very chargeable and the roads are difficult and dangerous to pass. When King Shah Aulum came down with his army in the year 1708 to destroy his brother Kam Buksh, we immediately found a quicker vent than ordinary for our broad cloth; and indeed for all other sorts of goods consumed among them. And when Dawood Khan was formerly Nabob of these parts, he always kept a great body of horse on pay, which obliged the neighbouring Governors to do the same, being always jealous of each other. And amongst these horsemen by much the greatest quantity of our broad cloth was consumed; the trade from this place to their camps being very considerable. But now our Dewan, who is Subah of all this Country, seldom keeps above five hundred horse with him; and the Government in general being grown much weaker than in Aurungzebe's time, none of the great men keep up the number of horse allowed by the King, but apply the money to their own use; and this has brought a considerable damp upon our trade in general, but more especially upon the sale of your manufactures. For we have not only lost the camp trade, but the roads are become impassable for want of those horsemen to scour them as usual; so that the merchants are discouraged

from coming down with their money and diamonds to buy up and carry away our Europe and other goods as formerly ; and we cannot see any likelihood of better times till the Government is well settled, and some active man employed in the Government of these parts."

It is clear from this report that the failure to persist in Governor Pitt's policy in this matter had very soon resulted in a serious diminution of the sales of English manufactures in the Carnatic.

That his Council and the community at Fort St George fully appreciated the value of his negotiations with the Mogul and the importance of his remaining at his post until they were concluded is evident from the following entry in the Consultation Book of the 8th of January 1709: "This day the Armenians, Moors and Gentue Inhabitants of this place, hearing that the Governor designed home upon the Litchfield, deliver'd in a Petition (as entered after this Consultation), requesting that he would stay till the business of a Phirman was negotiated with the Grand Mogull, And all the Councill urged the same which the Governor cou'd nor wou'd not promise to comply therewith, but take some days to consider thereof, having disposed all his affairs for goeing home on the Litchfield." Ultimately he was persuaded to stay on, a decision which he afterwards had good reason to regret. Writing to a friend (Joseph Martin) ten days after the presentation of the petition, he says: "I observe you have laid S^r^ Nicholas Waite aside and wish they had done so by me too, thô not for the same reasons, and then I could have come home as I intended by the Litchfeild, having all things prepared for it, but by the first ship in September, nothing but death shall prevent, having laid aside all trade, and stay till then for no other reason but to finish your grand affairs with the Emperour[1]."

[1] Hedges 3. 114.

## CHAPTER XXI

### LAST DAYS AT FORT ST GEORGE

During his last two years at Fort St George Governor Pitt was not so fortunate in maintaining amicable relations with some of the members of his staff as he was in the conduct of his diplomatic negotiations with the Mogul and his chief officers. He had, it is true, relieved himself of the burden of the presence of his old enemy Fraser at the daily consultations in the Council Chamber; but the continued residence of that irritating personage in the city, spying on his every action, writing home on every opportunity to Gough and Braddyll and in the meanwhile making all the mischief he could with the natives and any of his former colleagues whom he could incite to discontent with the existing régime, must have been a constant source of annoyance. It would be a mistake to suppose that the Governor was generally unpopular with his subordinates. He was no doubt a masterful and rough-tongued chief, as was to be expected from his early seafaring antecedents. But his bark was worse than his bite, and he was a firm and constant supporter and friend of those who served him faithfully. There is no reason to doubt that the majority of the Company's servants at Fort St George would have endorsed the opinion formed of him when he first came out there, which was expressed by one of them, whom his cousin John Pitt had vainly attempted to detach

from his allegiance and who had written back: "Our present Governor is really of himself a very good man." In his letters home to the Court he had spoken highly of many of them. But several of those who knew him best and the great difficulties he had surmounted were now dead or absent. Francis Ellis, his faithful second in command, had died in 1704. Roberts, who had succeeded him, had also gone; and Brabourne, of whom Pitt always speaks in his correspondence with appreciation for his good qualities, had been for some time away at Anjingo, where he was acting as chief of the factory. Raworth, who was the son of one of his few friends on the Court of the New Company and had been second in command of the New Company's settlement at Masulipatam, but was now on the Council of Fort St George, seems also to have deserved and enjoyed his confidence. The same may be said of Gulston Addison, the elder brother of the great Joseph Addison, who had for some years been one of the Council of the fort, and had befriended the widow of Consul John Pitt when she came there, in return for which she had made him her executor and left him a legacy of 3000 pagodas. Addison's friendly relations with her had in no way impaired his friendship with the Governor, who as he has himself said, was not a vindictive man. But there were other members of the Council with whose shortcomings he was only too painfully familiar; and of these he has not failed to unburden his mind freely from time to time in his correspondence. One of them was Empson. Of this man, in a letter to his son of the 21st of January 1708 he writes[1]: "The 9th inst. Mr. Empson dyed, and noe wiser than he lived: noe will nor any manner of accounts. He was a wretch, and yet cannot say but he has left many of

[1] Dropmore I. 35.

his fellows behind him....All the custome he ever paid the Company never defrayed the charge of bringing the water he drank." Of late years Pitt had impressed on Sir Thomas Cook and other members of the Court the importance of sending out better men. In a letter to Cook on the 11th of September 1706, he had written[1]:

"Unless you get abler men to manage your affairs here abroad, you must unavoidably be ruin'd, for 'tis a rule amongst 'em that they must have employs according to their seniority, let this qualification be what it will, by which you don't suffer a little, now as here in your councill, the greatest place of trust is your warehouse keeper, Sea Customer, and Paymaster, now when any ignorant, dishonest or raw young fellow in busyness (that his own ffather wou'd not trust with a hundred pounds) comes into these employs must you not of course suffer by it? 'tis true 'tis an ungratefull office for one to Characterize men, thô necessary, and I wonder that you don't pick out some sober and discreet man that comes into these parts and knows your servants, and take him to your Selves and conjure him by all that is Sacred, that he will impartially tell their character to the best of what he has heard or seen....I would beg of you to take a view of your Councill here, and consider that if Mr. Roberts and I should dye, into whose hands the management of your affairs must fall?"

Nearly two years before, in a letter to Sir William Langhorne, he had written[2]:

"If ever the Company thrives, they must elect such men as are most capable of serving them, and not such as are put upon them by importunities and for relation sake. For 'tis to be considered your servants are at a great distance, not under your eye, to be controul'd and advis'd by you." "Seniority certainly is the best and justest Rule for preferring your Servants, but then 'tis very necessary that merrit should goe with it; but those you make judges of it are generally such as have noe share in it, thô soe much cunning as to assist each other with their vote."

Again in a letter to Sir Edmund Harrison he says[3]:

"Honesty and ability are certainly the only qualifications that should recommend persons to your service but if I was under

[1] Hedges 3. 102. [2] Hedges 3. 95 [3] Hedges 3. 103.

a necessity to take a Servant that wanted either of 'em, it should be the former: for I could call him to an Account, and oblige him to satisfaction: but fools that want ability can give none.

'Tis very true what I formerly wrote you that the Old Company lost ten times as much by employing fools as they did by Knaves, and honest W$^{m}$" (Fraser) "with many others I could name, may be on the list for both."

On any list of the Company's servants, who in his opinion were thus doubly disqualified, there can be little doubt that the Governor without the slightest hesitation would have placed a kinsman of Mr Nathaniel Herne, one of the members of the Court of the Old Company, a Mr Frederick, who had come out on the Council of Fort St George, and was fated to give him much trouble. Frederick had married a daughter of Captain Seaton, who had for many years been the chief officer of the garrison, and when sober seems to have been a capable and valuable officer, though incurably quarrelsome and eccentric. Before Governor Pitt came out to Fort St George he had been thus referred to in one of the General Letters to the Court from the Council: "Among several children born here, whose parents send home for education in this ship is Ann Seaton, the daughter of Lieutenant Seaton, who has served your Honours nine years in Bengal and this garrison and is a very able and useful officer. He has paid Pagodas twenty six permission, as the rest have done, and humbly begs your Honours will please to remit it[1]." Unfortunately about the same time, on the 9th of August 1695, the following entry occurs in the Consultation Book: "Last night Lieutenant Seaton at about twelve o'clock, being in drink, drew his swoard upon the Choultry Guard, and ran a Portuguese soldier through the arm. Dr. Bulkley being ordered to view the wound, reports that it is not dangerous:

[1] Wheeler I, 297.

and Lieutenant Seaton, being sent for, answer was brought that he was sick of a fever[1]." On the 1st of October 1698, a few weeks after the arrival of Governor Pitt at Madras, the following account of a quarrel between Seaton and a brother officer appears in the Consultation Book:

"There arising some words this afternoon between Lieutenant Sinclair and Lieutenant Seaton, Lieutenant Sinclair came now and acquainted the Governor and Council that Lieut. Seaton called him coward and struck him. Lieutenant Seaton being sent for, and the reason of their difference demanded, answers that there did pass some foolish langauge between them, but disowns that he did strike Lieut. Sinclair. Mr. Stone and Mr. Matthews who were present, being also sent for, were enquired of whether they knew the occasion of their difference; but both declared that they only heard some words pass between them at the Sea Gate, and that afterwards near the Inner Fort Gate they saw some blows past, but know not which struck first."

On this occasion Seaton was dismissed the service, but was afterwards reinstated on petition. This was not the first time he had been cashiered and taken back again into the service of the Company.

Again in August 1703 the following entry appears in the Consultation Book: "The Governor having confined Captain Seaton and Mr. Stratford for going out yesterday to the Company's old garden to fight a duel, he ordered them to be brought up this day before him in Council to examine into the occasion of it; when it was found that Captain Seaton gave the challenge without any manner of provocation, so that it was resolved that their confinement should be continued till we had considered what punishment we should afflict (*sic*) on them to deter others from doing the like[2]." They were accordingly kept ten days in confinement, at the end of which time Seaton was fined 200 and Stratford 50 pagodas. Three weeks later Seaton's fine was remitted on his

[1] Wheeler 1. 339.

[2] Wheeler 2. 28.

expression of contrition for his offence and "in consideration of the great charge of his children" and his promises "never again to do the like."

There is no reason to suppose that Pitt had entertained any personal ill-feeling against Seaton on account of these repeated escapades. Like others of his fellow countrymen at the fort, he had been disposed to overlook the failings of this quarrelsome and hard-drinking officer out of consideration of his past services and pity for his wife and daughters. Frederick was not the only Englishman at Fort St George who had married into the Seaton family. One of the Governor's own kinsmen, Antony Ettrick, from Holt in Dorset, had lately married another of the daughters; and on his behalf the Governor had written the following kindly letter home to the father of the young man on the 17th of February 1707[1]:

"I must advise you that your Sone Anthony is marry'd which I would have disswaded him but could not prevaile, and thought it not convenient rigorously to oppose it, for as I intend home speedily I was apprehensive that he might make a worse choice after I am gone, as once he was like to doe. The young woman he has marry'd is Capt. Seaton's Daughter, whose ffather is Captain of one of the Companys of Souldiers in this Garrison. He has about a thousand pounds with her, but what is most valuable is that She is a vertuous, modest, good-humour'd, comely young woman, and I don't doubt but will make him a good Wife, since he was resolv'd to marry in these parts, for she justly deserves the Character I give her. Soe to contribute to their happiness I should advise you to send him out a couple of thousand pounds, or what you can conveniently give him to enable him to trade, and something to your other Sone to begin the world with, for a mans youth is the only time to drudge in busyness, and that which would chiefly contribute towards makeing it a pleasure is to have good working tools, and that generally begets good success. You are my old friend, acquaintance and kinsman, who I advise to nothing but what I would doe my Selfe. For is it not much better to give our Children something

[1] Hedges 3. 108.

in our lifetime, to see how they manage it and improve it, then to keep it like Curmudgeons, and leave it them at our Death because we cant help it? Soe with my Service to your Selfe, Lady and all friends, I am, Sr your affecte. kinsman

and obliged humble Servant,

Thos. Pitt."

Within a fortnight after the despatch of this letter, Captain Seaton had again misconducted himself, as appears from the following entry in the Consultation Book[1]:

"Thursday 27th February 1707. The Governor lays before the Council the insolent action of Captain Seaton, who on Sunday last marched part of his Company (and had all had not the Governor commanded them off) over the Company's calicoes that lay a dyeing; notwithstanding there was much more room than enough to have marched the men clear of them as usual. And afterwards, when the Governor sent for him to demand his reason for doing so base an action, he had the impudence to tell him he did not understand it. Upon which when he came for the word in the evening, the Governor told him he was suspended till he had advised with the Council: for that he thought him not fitting to serve the Company any longer, nor would he bear any more with his insolences. It is agreed that he stands suspended, and that the consideration for breaking him be deferred to another time."

Eventually Seaton lost his commission for this offence, and Mr John Roach was appointed captain of the garrison in his place. Roach's subsequent career amply justified this promotion. For he greatly distinguished himself in 1711 in an engagement at Fort St David, in which he inflicted heavy losses on a large body of native troops, who were besieging the settlement[2]; and again in 1717, during the Governorship of Mr Joseph Collet, when he defeated and drove off the forces of the local Nawab[3], who had seized Trivatore with 250 horse and 1000 foot and had cut down the Company's flagstaff

[1] Wheeler 2. 48. [2] Wheeler 2. 154.
[3] Wheeler 2. 283—289.

there. On the latter occasion the Council passed the following resolution: "Agreed that in consideration of Lieutenant John Roach's former services at Fort St David, for which the Honourable Company have in their letters ordered him a gratuity, which has never yet been given, and also in consideration of his eminent service at Trivatore on the 19th instant, in defeating the enemy, with so much loss on their side and without the loss of one man on ours; that the President by his Commission constitute Lieutenant John Roach, Major of all the Honourable Company's forces on the Coast of Coromandel and Island of Sumatra; and that a Gold Medal, with the Honourable Company's arms set round with diamond sparks, with an inscription on the reverse suitable to the occasion (the value about 300 pagodas) be given him," and "that his pay as Major be 20 pagodas per mensem." In after-years, when he had grown too old for active military service, Major Roach was appointed a Justice of the Peace and one of the Council of Fort St George. He returned home from India in 1735 by the same ship that brought Governor Pitt's cousin, George Morton Pitt, to England at the expiration of his Governorship[1]. There can be no doubt that the Company benefited by his substitution as Commander of Fort St George for Seaton, whose intemperate habits must not only have encouraged the soldiers to follow his example, but might have seriously endangered the defence of the fort in an emergency. But the promotion was an unfortunate one for the Governor. Frederick, Seaton's son-in-law, raised in Council an objection to it on the ground that Roach had been in France without leave, and that he was subject to certain penalties. This objection was overruled, and the following insulting comment on it was inserted in the Consultation Book[2]:

[1] Wheeler 3. 137. [2] Wheeler 1. 93.

"We cannot but think it a severe reflection on us, the Governor and Council here, that we should not be thought by Mr. Frederick to be better judges of these matters than himself: and that he should be the only person amongst us that is fit to judge of men and their capacity, when it is notoriously known by all in this place that profound ignorance and pride are his only qualifications."

As might have been expected, from this time forward Frederick and Seaton threw in their lot with Fraser; and the three persistently endeavoured to undermine the position of the Governor at Fort St George, and to blacken his reputation in England.

The Court of the United Company took some time in coming to a decision on the question of Fraser's suspension. Most unfortunately for Pitt, before any final conclusion had been arrived at with respect to it, Sir Thomas Cook, his firm friend and supporter, was struck down on the 16th of October 1708 by an apoplectic fit, which incapacitated him from taking any further part in the Company's affairs[1]. But for this untoward catastrophe, there is good ground for believing that the action of the Governor would have been supported and the suspension of Fraser confirmed by the Court. A year before, Captain Harrison had written out to Fort St George[2]: "Our good friend Sir Thomas reigns as much as ever, and holds more stock than ever. The agitators with him are Mr. Moore and Mr. Craggs, the last named being, on account of his intimacy with the Duke of Marlborough, as well as his own merits, in high favour in the City. Sir Gilbert" (Heathcote) "is Sovereign of the New Company and holds great sway in the City. The snake in the grass is jealousy of power. It is uncertain in which interest authority will centre; and the New Company, being apprehensive of defeat at the first election, are anxious to tie down

[1] Luttrell 6. 362.

[2] Dropmore 1. 30.

their antagonists to as humble terms as possible." "Sir Gilbert is your mortal enemy and will omit no opportunity to affront you. His party is considerable but unless they rout the Old Company entirely, your friends in the New Company are too numerous to permit you to be illused." After his apoplectic seizure Cook was hopelessly incapacitated (he died in the course of the next year) and Sir Gilbert Heathcote, Pitt's mortal enemy, reigned in his stead[1]. At this juncture, when every vote on the Court of the United Company was of the utmost importance, nothing could have been more inopportune, or more embarrassing to the Governor's friends on the Court than his unfortunate quarrel with Frederick. Within a month after Cook's illness, Robert Pitt wrote to his father[2]:

"1708 Nov. 15. London. I seize a fortunate opportunity of sending this letter by Captain Arnold to give you an account of the intentions of the Company towards you. The grounds on which they pretend to lay you aside are the unhappy troubles between the casts, and your treatment of Fraser upon that occasion, whose party they espouse in the most violent manner. The chief incendiary from abroad is Mr. Frederick, who in a very long and ingenious manner, has made wonderful complaints of your arbitrary proceedings, and ill treatment of him and most of the Council. He has written in a like strain to his kinsman, Mr. Nathaniel Herne, who I believe, does not stick at animating the Old Company, and your old and sure friends against you, while Gough and Braddyl are indefatigable in spiriting up the New Company. They have not even scrupled to say that the Company ought to seize on your person and effects, but that I believe they will hardly venture on. Such a violation of the property of the subject would properly be laid before the Parliament and Queen and Council. The person named to succeed you is one Captain Gibbons, brought in by the interest of Mr. Craggs and Mr. Moore. I am told he wants a fortune, and therefore will submit to any terms imposed on him, in order to get such an advantageous post—for the Company declare that the government of Fort St. George is the best employment belonging

[1] Luttrell 6. 486.

[2] Dropmore 1. 37.

to the English nation. A great deal of this trouble is owing to the infirmity of your good friend, Sir Thomas Cooke, who would have stopped hostile proceedings, had he not been permanently bereft of reason by a fit of apoplexy. I wrote to you last year that Mr. Dolben was making interest to succeed you. It is still a general opinion that he is intriguing for your post; but he assured me a few days ago that he had no such thought, and would not accept the appointment if it were offered to him. He is of opinion they will not lay you aside at all, or at least this year: and I hope you will put it out of their power to do so another year, by coming home immediately after the receipt of this letter. The account of Mr. Fraser's seditious behaviour has been communicated to every manager of the Old and New Companies; but what they most resent is your threatening to whip and hang one whom they had named of their Council, as they learn from Mr. Frederick's letter, on which they lay great stress. I believe Frederick will be promoted on account of his letter.

My wife intended to have written to you this day, but early in the morning was suddenly prevented by the birth of another son. We have now two boys and two girls."

The boy, whose birth was thus announced to his grandfather, was William Pitt, the great Lord Chatham.

This letter leaves no room for doubt as to the mischievous effect of Frederick's complaints to his kinsman and the Court of the arbitrary behaviour of the Governor to him. Whilst it was on its way to India, Pitt himself was complaining of Frederick to Cook, to whom he wrote the following letter, in ignorance of Cook's illness and its results[1]:

"Feb. 7th. 1709.

You shall find in October that I am firm in my Resolution of coming home, and nothing but death shall prevent, for as you hinted their service now is fitt for none but their Scoundrel favourites, and I doubt not but in very little time they'll find the effect of itt, and God alone knows the care and trouble I have had upon me to preserve the peace and tranquility of this place. For had I let loose the reins of Government as your letters from time to time have directed, long before this I doe firmly believe it had been in such confusion as irretrievable, whereas

[1] Hedges 3. 114.

now, I may speak it as a truth and without vanity, 'tis the jewell of all European settlements, but how long 'twill continue soe I cant say.

* * * * *

S^r^. I would begg you to observe the behaviour of Mr. Frederick, who is so prevented by the villainous caball he is in, that he is become pernicious to the Companys honour and interest.

* * * * *

Now I am writing of this poor mischievous wretch I must not omitt to let you know that when we had the trouble about the Cast, and that the right hand left us, amongst 'em was those that clear the Streets, which was omitted during that trouble, so when the Scavenger came to collect the duty many of the inhabitants refus'd to pay for that time, which the Scavenger acquainted me of, which at first I made light of and order'd him to send his servant again, but afterwards he came and told me that they were resolv'd not to pay itt, when I order'd him to bring me a list of such persons, which he did, and who should be at the head of 'em but this choice servant of yours, Frederick, who I imediately sent for and lock'd the door of the Consultation, and laid the Key upon the table, and very freely told him how I would use mutineers, and begin with him, then showed him the list, when he let fall a few penitential tears and promised amendment. And by what I found afterwards it was an agreement amongst many of 'em, but I cool'd their courage...."

It would seem from the earlier part of this letter that the Governor's high-handed proceedings in dealing with his recalcitrant subordinates had called forth on more than one previous occasion a warning note from Cook, which had been disregarded, the Governor being firmly persuaded in his own mind that any attempt on his part to conciliate his opponents on the Council would be productive of the worst consequences. It is conceivable that he was right in thinking so, having regard to the characters of the men with whom he had to deal. But on his own showing the enormity of which poor snivelling Frederick had been guilty on this occasion when the Governor seems to have threatened to whip and hang him as a mutineer appears to have consisted merely

in his signing in common with others a protest against being called upon to pay the scavenger for work which had not been done. It is easy to understand that Frederick's own version of what took place at the painful interview in question aroused the indignation of his kinsman Nathaniel Herne, who, though a member of the Court of the Old Company, was induced by it to go over to the side of the Governor's enemies.

The next letter which Robert Pitt wrote to his father, and which is dated the 13th of January 1709, shows clearly that this was the case, and that the main factors which turned the scale against the Governor at this crisis of his career were the untimely illness of Cook and the unfortunate quarrel with Frederick. It begins as follows[1]:

"Since I wrote to you last November by Captain Arnold the behaviour of the Company towards you has been as surprising to every one here as it will be to you abroad. Had it not been for Sir Thomas Cooke's illness, they could not have put such an affront on you. The main contrivers of it were those I mentioned to you in my last, backed up by Sir Gilbert Heathcott. The Old Company with the solitary exception of Mr. Nathaniel Herne his kinsman, stood fast to your interest. Mr. Moore especially showed as much zeal for you, as Mr. Herne inspired by the resentment of his kinsman, Mr. Fredericks, showed against you. I doubt not, since they would put an end to your Government, you will be pleased that such a fairminded man as Mr. Addison has been appointed to succeed you. The worst thing is that the Company should continue that seditious knave Fraser in their service, and espouse his tumultuous villainies by putting a slur on you. On the other hand your return home is necessary for your own comfort and the peace of your family which is still notwithstanding all my efforts to the contrary, as you will learn from Cousin Pitt, in a distracted state."

This letter does not seem to have reached Fort St George till the 17th of September 1709, when it arrived simultaneously with the official notification

[1] Dropmore I. 40.

of the Governor's removal from office and the appointment of Gulston Addison as his successor. In the meanwhile the Governor had been much exercised by the proceedings of Captain Seaton, who, now that he had been cashiered, had gone so far as to disseminate serious libellous statements reflecting on the honesty of his late chief. Amongst other things he had charged him with selling the post of the Chief Dubash for 500 pagodas. This having come to the Governor's ears, Seaton was brought to the fort from the Mount, where he had lately taken up his residence, and confronted with the man whom he had thus maligned. A somewhat stormy interview was the result, of which the Governor took down the following notes:

"This Evening being the Second of August about 5 o'clock I discoursed Capt Seaton in the Consultation Room, when haveing charged him with his having said that I had 500 pagodas given me to make Poppa Cheif Dubash, which he owned and told me I was betrayed in whatever I did, or Speak, by all my Servants about me, and that I had not a friend upon all the Place, whatever I thought.

Then I asked him how he durst presume to talk up and down of what I bought or sold, and how it was possible for him to know anything of it, to which he answered that he had so good Intelligence that their was not the least thing done or said by me but that he knew, and to convince me desired leave to ask me some questions which I permitted him to do, and were as follows, whether Mr. Roberts did not write me to request that he might be concerned in a great Diamond I had bought? Answered 'false!' Whether a person did not come and wish me joy of its being sold for 500,000 Dollars? 'False!' Whether two persons did not come from the Duan to demand a great Diamond, and that I gave one of them at coming 11 rupees, and the other at going away 150? 'All false,' only that one man came. Upon which I told him I found him a Villain, and as I found he had been endeavouring to betray me, doubtless he would do the same to the Garrison, so ordered the Captain of the guard to confine him in the Ensigns room, none to come to him but the Councill[1]."

[1] Hedges 3. 116.

On the following day a Council was called at which all the members of the Council, including Gulston Addison, Raworth and Frederick, were present. The official record of this meeting is as follows:

"Fort St. George. Wednesday August 3rd 1709.

At a Consultation. Present Thos. Pitt, Governor and President, Wm. Martin, Robt. Raworth, Tho. Frederick, Gulston Addison, Richd. Hunt, Henry Davenport.

The Governour this day acquainted the Councill that he having lately heard of some Villanous and Scandalous reflections that had been made upon him by the Late Lieutenant Seaton, who he yesterday sent for from the Mount and Examined thereon, who with his usuall impudence everred to him the Notorious falsitys, that ever could be thought or imagined, upon which, he said, he had confin'd him to the Ensigns Room, and had desired that he might be sent for up and examined thereto, which accordingly was done: and when he came into the Consultation Room before us, without first hearing what the Governor had to charge him with, and the reason of his confinement, he immediately addressed himself to the Councill, Saying, Gentlemen of Councill, I am come here to accuse the Governour for buying a great Diamond to the Company's prejudice, when the Governor answered and told him we would discourse of that by and by, and demanded of him whether he had said that he had received of Paupa, to make him Chief Dubash, five hundred Pagodas, and that Ramapa offered Seaven hundred to be continued, which was refused, this he acknowledged to have said, but being commanded to prove the same, he answered he had it from a black fellow, but could not remember who he was, after which the two Dubashes before mentioned declared they never gave the Governour a Pagoda, or that he ever asked or hinted to them of any such thing, and to this they took the solemnest oath in the Pagoda. Then the Governour demanded of him what he knew about his buying a Diamond, he answered in Generall terms that he knew every perticular of it, when he was commanded to acquaint the Councill with it, which he said he would then do, knowing their would be a change of Government this month, and therefore what this Governour said to him did not signify a farthing, with many such Insolent and Villanous expressions, he further said that to his knowledge the Governour was betrayed by all his black Servants about him, insomuch that he knows everything that was done and said, nay as much as in his counting house, and to give an Instance thereof said that the great Diamond he had bought was entered in his Books,

Fol. 64, he farther told us that one Rogers that went home in October last for Bombay had carried papers along with him, signed by black people, that would do the Governour's business, the which Sr Nicholas Wait had got translated and carried home with him.

The Governour also acquainted the Councill that he had very good reason to suspect that this Seaton was turned Informer to the" (native) "Government and held a Correspondence with them, and promised in a few days to prove the same, in Expectation of which and what the Governour charged him with, and he confessed before us, we now unanimously confirm his confinement, till other means can be considered of, and for what discourse passed between the Governour and him yesterday in his Consultation room, after his coming from the Mount is as entered after this Consultation, the truth of which he shall be always ready to justify by Oath or otherwise."

The impudent accusations of corruption brought against him by Seaton at these two interviews can have given the Governor little concern. But the reference by Seaton to his purchase of the great diamond was a far more serious matter. More than seven years had now passed since that famous jewel had left India, and during the greater part of that time the Governor had good reason to believe that little that was certain about that transaction was known to his staff. But in London its existence was now an open secret, and the Governor had been warned more than a year before that Gough and Braddyll were plotting to create trouble about it on the ground that the sending of it home was an offence against the Mogul's laws. In reply he had written to his son on the 1st of October 1708[1]: "I observe what danger you say my grand affair is in: sure there cannot be so much villany in mankind as you suggest of those two. That law of the Mogul's extends only to his own subjects, and if such a thing should be broached, I know not where it will end, and it may chance to be an utter extirpation of the trade, at

[1] Dropmore I. 36.

least that of diamonds; for if I am to be undone I will undoe the world if I can. Our nation, I am certaine, will not countenance such an unparaleld villany. It is against the law of Spaine to bring any dollars out of the country, but you see what comes." From the last paragraph of the above official report in the Consultation Book it would seem that he had now obtained some definite evidence that Seaton was in correspondence with the Mogul's Government to induce them to demand the return of the great diamond. How far Seaton was acting in collusion with Fraser and Frederick in this matter seems uncertain. That the Governor himself had no doubt that the three were acting in concert is clear from a letter which he wrote to his son in the following May from Bergen, in which he says: "In June last they fell a contriveing to stir up the Government to give trouble upon account of a great diamond they had heard I had bought. The first fellow they put upon it was Seaton[1]." But that Frederick at any rate did not dare to support Seaton when the latter was brought to book is clear from the next report in the Consultation Book, which he signed, though the Governor tells us it was "with teares in his eyes[2]." That report was as follows.

"Consultation 11th August 1709. "This day Lewtenant Seaton was brought up again before us when the Governour told him that since there was no yet changed Government, It was high time to make him know there was some, and read to him what he had said to him on the 2nd Instant in the Consultation Room and what he said the next day there, before the Governour and Councill and demanded of him to prove the same, instead thereof he impudently denyed all he had said in private to the Governour and Councill, with strange imprecations and asseverations of Gods Vengeance upon him if ever he had said it, this from any other man in the world would have amazed us all, but by the many years Experience we have had of him, we are entirely satisfied that he is a person capable of

[1] Dropmore I. 46. [2] Hedges 3. 117.

perpetrating any villiany that can be named, the Governour also produced two Letters, one from Mr. Raworth and the other from Mr. Coppin, both proving what (by) the Governour in private and before the Councill Seaton was charged with and a great deal more, which Letters were now read, and the persons present that wrote them, who was ready to tender their oaths to the truth, yet nevertheless he denyed all as before mentioned, both which Letters likewise prove his having been tampering and corresponding with the Government, and many other vile Actions which Letters remain in the Governours hands to prove the same when ever there is an occasion, so we demanded him whether he had anything more to say, to which he answered that he had not, and as he withdrew denyed again all he was charged with. ...There is no ill action can be named but what we beleive he has been Guilty of, as well as what now charged with, and that he has been many years the Plague, Pest and Disturber of the Peace of the Place, and now to compleat his Villainy aims at nothing than the betraying of the Governour and trade of the place...'tis unanimously agreed that he be confined till the First Ship goes for England and in her to be sent home a Prisoner to the Company."

The days of his official life were numbered; but nothing could testify more convincingly than these entries in the Consultation Book that Thomas Pitt held on to the end to the resolution, which he had expressed ten years before to his cousin, the Consul, "There shall be but one Governor whilst I am here."

# CHAPTER XXII

## THE GOVERNOR'S DEPOSITION

THOMAS PITT'S official life as Governor of Fort St George came to a sudden end on Sunday morning, the 17th of September 1709. The day before he had written to his son Robert: "We expect Captain Harrison here in December from Bengal, when I am resolved to enbark with him[1]." Harrison, who was an old friend and favourite and one of his most constant correspondents, had written to him two years previously: "I hope my ship will have the honour of carrying you home[2]." In the course of the afternoon, a vessel which subsequently proved to be the *Heathcote*, named after the Governor's mortal enemy, Sir Gilbert Heathcote, was descried approaching the port from the northward. Soon after dark her commander, Captain Tolson, came on shore, and had an interview with the Governor, to whom he handed the Company's packet, at the same time telling him that there were great alterations; that he was dismissed the Company's service, and that a meeting of the Council ought to be called at once[3]. The Governor informed him that this was impossible, not only by reason of the lateness of the hour, but also because several of the members of the Council were away at the Mount. He directed Captain Tolson to observe particularly the condition

[1] Dropmore I. 42.
[2] Dropmore I. 30.
[3] Hedges 3. 119.

in which the packet had been delivered to him, and to be at the Fort by eight o'clock on the following morning, so that he might be able to testify that it had not been tampered with. At eight o'clock on the Sunday morning the Council met, and their proceedings are thus recorded in the Consultation Book: "The Governour refus'd to surrender the Goverment by virtue of the Superscription on the Packett, but demanded a Superceedent to his Commission by Vertue of which he had been Governour of this Place upwards of eleven years, so after some hesitation the Packett was opened, wherein there was a Commission that Superceeded his; he also demanded the reading of the Generall letter, which was refused him; but in the Packet their being a Letter from the Managers to him, wherein 'twas fully expressed his dismission from their Service, and the Constituteing Gulston Addison Esqr. in his room, he immediately read the Cash, and tendered the Ballance thereof, being one thousand nine hundred and thirty five Rupees, twenty fanams and three Cash: but the New Governour desir'd the payment for that time might be deferr'd for that he was very much indispos'd, so the Governour Just as he left the Chair challenged the whole board, or any upon the place to charge him with an unjust action dureing the whole time of his Goverment, or that he had ever refused a kindness to any one that asked it, and that it lay in his power, or that he had ever acted arbitrary in any one matter, notwithstanding some villians of this place have had the Impudence to represent him otherwise, so rose out of the chair and placed the New Governour in it"—a very characteristic retirement from his office.

The superscription to the Company's packet, which he had very properly declined to regard as of itself superseding his own formal Commission as

Governor was "To the Honble Gulston Addison Esqr. President, Messrs Fraser, Mountague, Martin, Raworth, Frederick, Hunt, Bulkley and Jennings, at Fort St. George." The letter from the Court of Managers, which was delivered to him on the opening of the packet, was dated the 28th of January 1709, and was as follows :

"Sr

You having for some time past intimated to us your desire to return to England, we have granted your request, and have appointed Mr. Gulston Addison to be President and Governour of Fort St. George, and in Case of his death or absence, that Mr. John Brabourne succeed thereto, and settled the Council as appears by our generall Letter and Commission now sent by these Ships, and by said Letter have directed that you do immediately Surrender the Government to the Succeeding President, and all Books, Papers, Effects and other things belonging to us.... That when you desire to take passage on any of our Ships who shall be bound for England, the President and Council are order'd to direct the Commander to receive you on board with your necessaryes, To Allow you the Great Cabin, and give respect on the voyage Suitable to the Character you have born in our Service.......

All which we acquaint you with in order to your Complyance, we are

Your Loving Friends &c."

This letter from his loving friends, the Board of Managers, was perhaps as unobjectionable as could reasonably have been expected in the circumstances. It contained, it is true, no such expression of regret for the loss of his long and eminent services as it would undoubtedly have done if his firm friend Sir Thomas Cook had remained Governor of the Company. But there was no reason to complain of its actual contents. It was undoubtedly the case that he had repeatedly expressed to the Court his desire and intention of returning to England; and he could not well now find fault with them for having at last acceded to his wishes, and appointed another Governor in his place. As a matter of fact, as we have

seen, he had on the day before he received this announcement, written to his son acquainting him of his deliberate intention to leave Fort St George that December. Nor had he any reason to object to either of the two men selected to succeed him. Writing of Addison a few days later to his son, he says: "I think they have made a very good choice in him for Governor[1]." And he had always written and thought highly of Brabourne. But the general letter of the Court, the reading of which had very properly been refused him at the Council meeting, seeing that he was no longer in office, was a very different document. No useful purpose could have been served by granting his request; and it was perhaps fortunate in the interests of the harmony of the proceedings at the last Consultation at the Fort at which he was present, that he was spared the indignity of hearing it read, though he seems to have been afterwards permitted, by the courtesy of his successor, to peruse it at leisure in private. It contained a great deal that was calculated to rouse the indignation of a far more patient man than he could claim to be. It was in fact a grossly unfair and insulting document, not only announcing the removal of Fraser's suspension and his reinstatement as a member of the Council, but also containing some very serious reflections on his own lack of ability and diligence, and attributing to him the whole blame for the quarrel between the two castes.

"The charge against Mr. Fraser," the Managers say in it, "we have considered, and would hope that no Englishman, especially none of our servants, would be guilty of such pernicious practices, which strike at the root of the well being of the place; and are more inclined to this opinion, because we find in the consultation of the 22nd August, that the Council were generally unwilling to suspend him, which we cannot think they would be if they apprehended he was justly taxed: and that it

[1] Hedges 3. 120.

was Mr. Pitt's solemn averring that he would sit no more with him that prevailed with them. We have therefore reinstated him, as thinking it not fit to give so much countenance to any Governor whatsoever, as to approve his single opinion, agains' all the rest of the Council, in a case of this nature, which if it was true does not appear to us to have been proved; though we shall always lodge a power in our President and Council to suspend any of the Council, or other subordinates, when they have or think they have a just reason; and if it be of great crimes they are charged with that deserve confinement we shall approve it[1]."

The Council, it may be remembered, on the 22nd of August were generally unwilling to suspend Fraser on the evidence then before them. Day by day from that time forward the evidence against him had accumulated; and by the 16th of September no member of the Council seems to have entertained the slightest doubt of his treachery. For on that day they one and all agreed to inflict on him a far more serious and degrading punishment than suspension; and unanimously resolved that he should be placed in close confinement in the Fort, under the guard of a sentinel, and that no one should be allowed access to him. From that time onward the position steadily improved; and the Governor had no serious difficulty in inducing the rebels to return. The utmost, therefore, that could be deduced from the reluctance of some of his colleagues to suspend Fraser on the 22nd of August was that they regarded his suspension on that day as premature; whilst his subsequent conduct and the proceedings of the mob convinced them that they had been wrong and the Governor right in treating Fraser as a traitor. The Managers themselves had not long to wait before Fraser gave them good reason bitterly to regret the course which they had taken in reinstating him. The Governor probably was not far wrong in the

[1] Wheeler 2. 59.

explanation of their conduct which he suggested to his son Robert, that Fraser had been kept in to serve the turn of some of the Managers as infamous as himself[1].

But if the reinstatement of Fraser was unjustifiable, still more so were the reflections which the Managers in their general letter had found it convenient to cast on the ability and diligence of their late Governor, who had not only served them faithfully far longer than any of his predecessors had done, but had also been unquestionably the ablest and most diligent servant the Company had ever possessed, whose knowledge of India and the characteristics of its inhabitants and rulers was unrivalled, and whose successes in India had been unprecedented throughout the whole of his career. The direct cause of the outbreak of the quarrel between the Right and Left Hand Castes was the carrying out by him of the directions of the Managers themselves with respect to the contracts for the sale and purchase of the Company's goods, and the breaking down of the monopoly that had been so injurious to the Company's trade. This he had effected without the employment of any violence, or the permanent loss of a single native inhabitant of the settlement. In the face of these undoubted facts, the following passages in the Managers' general letter[2], are to say the least, even more indefensible than their reinstatement of Fraser:

"Without entering," they wrote, "into a particular detail of the matter, we say in general, that the generality of men in all countries are naturally disposed to be at ease and live peaceably, if they have a quiet possession of liberty and property; and the most turbulent spirits will in a good measure lie still unless they have a specious handle given them on account of hardships done or offered to be done them. Nor does it appear probable to us that either of the two Castes would have ventured

[1] Hedges 3. 120.

[2] Wheeler 2. 83.

to fly in the face of Government, which is or should be power, without a real or apprehended great provocation; nor can we think that the Right Hand Caste would have carried things to this extremity on the single quarrel of the Left Hand Caste making a wedding in their own streets. It seems to us that the seeds of discord lay deeper, and that things growing ripe for a rupture, this handle was taken to begin the quarrel and set fire to the fuel that was before preparing for it. We should have esteemed it a praiseworthy management in our President and Council to have foreseen and prevented this mutinous disposition before it broke out, or at least to have quenched it when it first began to flame.

Nothing does better bespeak the ability and diligence of Governors than keeping their subjects and dependents in quiet; and they can never do that without an impartial administration of justice to all under them; for whether they themselves, or others by their authority or connivance, oppress or injure the subject, it comes to all one in the upshot; that is to say, first the people secretly murmur and complain, then they break out into more open reproaches, and at last into downright mutinies and rebellions; and this seems to us to be the true reason why those scurrilous papers were fastened upon the Stones set up, and afterwards on the walls of the town; whereas the Wise Man's remark will be found to be eternally true 'That the Throne can only be established in righteousness.'

It was very surprising to us to read that so many of the handicrafts and other useful hands, went away on this quarrel; and gave us but ordinary apprehensions of the conduct of the then administration. Surely they were too valuable to be parted with without the last extremity. All nations and times have agreed in this, that useful people are the riches as well as the strength of a city or country; and although we readily agree that neither the one nor the other Caste are over honest, or will scruple laying hold of any handle for their own benefit; yet it seems plain to us there must be something more than ordinary at the bottom that should make the Right Hand Caste go away in general in a body; and that the heads of them consent to be at the charge of maintaining the handicrafts people at St. Thomé.

On the whole matter we heartily recommend to you all to endeavour in your stations to prevent such like quarrels in future: and to that end to take care the established ancient privileges of both Castes be preserved to them, and the like to all other the inhabitants; and that all of them have the free possession of their liberty and property; that justice be administered equally and impartially and no real cause given of discontent; and then if you find any makebates that would

be putting the people into a ferment, make them public examples, as their faults deserve, and remember in such cases 'too much pity spoils a city.'

The cant of this protracted homily is as conspicuous as its inconsistency. "Makebates that would be putting the people into a ferment are," the Managers say, "to be made public examples, as their faults deserve." But Fraser, who during three successive Governorships had been the most notorious makebate, and who had at last succeeded in creating the most serious ferment of the people recorded in the history of the city, was rewarded by the Managers by being reinstated; whilst the Governor who had ventured to make a public example of him was dismissed in ignominy from the Company's service for doing so.

Gulston Addison, the new Governor, seems to have had no sympathy whatever with Fraser and his party, who for some time past had been plotting at the Mount with Seaton, at whose house they had been in the habit of meeting twice a week[1]. Pitt says: "Some of them had been often heard to say that they were sure they had enough against mee to take my life, but believed the forfeiting of my estate might save mee." He adds: "I charged Frederick with it in Consultation, who denied his being concerned, but owned he had heard of such a thing, when I told him it behoved him as one of the Councill to have acquainted the Board therewith, to which wee had his usual answer, fell a crying, which confermed his guilt." The appointment of Addison as Governor over the head of his senior, Fraser, of which they seem to have had earlier intimation than Pitt or Addison, must have been a sore disappointment to these conspirators; but it does not seem to have deterred them from continuing their intrigues to

[1] Dropmore I. 44, 45.

damage the late Governor's reputation, or from trying to stir up the Right Hand Caste against his successor, if we may judge from the following passages in a letter written by Pitt to his son Robert reporting their proceedings and the untimely death of Addison.

"Mr. Addison," he writes, "before the ship's arrivall had bin a little indisposed with the gout or rumatisme in his knee, but not soe much as to lye by it; but this sudden news and weight of business made him a little limp, but againe recovered soe as to sett to business; but at the first consultation held Fraser was summoned, took his place and when they broke up was followed by a great traine of the right hand cast to his house, giveing out that the Company had left that matter to him solely to bee settled; which incouraged them the next day to drop a cajan, the purport being to stirr up the people to a second insurrection. The Governor ordered it to bee burned and sent for the heads of the casts, and told them he was soe well satisfyed with my settling that matter that if any of them dare to give trouble he would leave them to the mercy of the souldiers."

"On the arrivall of the ships there was a report that Fraser, Frederick and Company had wrote to their correspondents in England (who I believe to bee of the same stamp for honour and honesty) that if they would turne mee out immediately on the ship's arrivall they would procure a thousand petitions against mee: which I believe true, for they went about and would have suborned severall people but could not procure one. ......But at last they perswaded Surapa to justifye a paper, which they carryed before the Governour and Councill: but that old villaine was soe terrifyed with remorse of conscience that he fell a trembling and denyed it all, when they sent him to the pagodoe with a bramine accused in that paper, where they most solemnly swore all was false and the Governor himself knew that it was soe, and soe exploded the villany that he told mee hee would imprisone the old villaine for his life, and afterwards the wretch himself [told] mee that those two beforementioned promised him that if hee would sweare anything against mee, they had order from the Company to bring him into greater esteem than ever hee was in that place.......The paper mentioned comes inclosed in this......and what is most materiall I believe had its birth in England.......After all which before mentioned and that Governor Addison (had) declared hee would walke in my steps, hee fell ill againe, and when I visited him, as he desired I would doe as often as I could, hee told mee

his resentments against Fraser about the casts, and said by what hee had seen and heard since the arrivall of the ships (smiting his breast) that hee believed in his conscience hee was at the bottom of that confusion, and wished the right hand cast had not given him something to make room for Fraser, for that he found such a disorder in his stomach that in his life time hee never had the like. I was soe concerned at this that I imparted it to severall people as soon as I came from him, and the thought of it made mee uneasye all that night, for that I had left him one of my attorneys, besides the doubt I had upon mee for the wellfare of the place. This poor man, a few days after, dyed, and in such confusion and agonyes that I have not seene the like, which was October 17, when I was ready to imbarque on the Heathcotte, but deferd itt for his buryall, and came off October 21."

Meanwhile Fraser had opportunely left the Fort, to take up his Deputy-Governorship at Fort St David, where he had got into trouble during the first year of Pitt's Governorship. The circumstances of Addison's tragic death, happening as it did so soon after the announcement of his intention to follow in his predecessor's footsteps and his threats to imprison Surapa for life, and to employ the soldiery against the rebels, give some colour to the suspicion which Pitt entertained that he had been poisoned by or on behalf of the Right Hand Caste. The advantages which that caste were likely to gain by his removal at this juncture were greatly enhanced by the uncertainty that was beginning to prevail, whether Brabourne, who had been nominated by the Managers as his successor, was still in the land of the living. On the other hand it is only fair to remember that Addison was already ill when the news of his appointment as Governor had arrived at the Fort, and it is by no means unlikely that he succumbed to that illness. His death, to whatever cause it was due, was most opportune for Fraser and most unfortunate for the Company. For Brabourne had gone down in the *Chambers* frigate; and Fraser became Governor of Fort St George.

Thus at a most critical time three very unexpected deaths had occurred, productive of disastrous consequences to the interests of the English trade in India: Cook's, which had led to Pitt's dismissal from the Company's service, and those of the two men who had been nominated to succeed him. It is incredible that the Managers, with their experience of Fraser's antecedents and character, would have dreamt of appointing him Governor of Fort St George or that they would have taken him back into their service if they had foreseen that one result of their doing so would be that he would come into the supreme command of their affairs in the East. But they had only themselves to thank for that misfortune. When Pitt left the Fort, Brabourne's death was apprehended, but not known for certain. "In the only too probable event," he wrote[1], "of Mr. Brabourne, on the *Chambers* frigate, having been lost at sea, the government of that coast devolves upon that wicked and vilest of wretches, Fraser, whose infamous principles and ignorance will ruine it for ever. I delivered it up in the most flourishing state that ever any place of the world was in, vastly rich notwithstanding our great losses, and famous throughout all those parts of the world for our honourable and just dealings; free from all manner of tyranny, extortion oppression or corruption as to mee (I wish I could averr the same of others) which I suppressed as far as it was in my power, and prevented its being very burdensome to the commonalty; which occasioned the clamours of those few, who are the scum and scorne of the place, yet supported by their correspondents in England, who study to promote their private interest at the hasard of sacrificing that of all the adventurers. This is demonstrable by their last yeare's generall letter, of which I had

[1] Dropmore I. 44.

the perusall, when I admired as much the weakness of their management as I did at their mallice and false suggestions of mee. I shall give but few instances here of the flourishing condition of Maderass. In May or June last there was at one time fifty sayle of ships in the roade, besides small craft at least 200: the revenues of last yeare amounting to between 70 and 800,000" (? 80,000) "pagodas, of which above 10,000 arises out of the Mint. The place, when I left it, was not onely admired but in favour of all the kings and princes in those parts; a regular and peaceable government within our selves, and continued friendship of all about us. I brought the trade of the King of Siam to our port, and sent them away soe well satisfyed that I believe they will return and settle a factory, which may probably open a trade for Japan." And he goes on to enumerate the unprecedented favours which had recently been received by him and the Company from the Great Mogul, to which reference has already been made in Chapter XX.

It is impossible not to sympathise with his feelings in leaving in the charge of such a man as Fraser this "jewell of all European settlements," as he had fondly termed it in his last letter to Sir Thomas Cook. He had written home three years before that nothing should prevent him from returning to England, but the death of Aurungzeb[1]; and that if that happened, he could not in honour allow the government to fall into the hands of Fraser and his party. Now the negotiations with Aurungzeb's successor, Shah Aulum, and his ministers were proceeding far more favourably than he could himself have possibly anticipated. But they were not completed; and no one could have realised more fully than he did the danger of leaving them uncompleted in the hands of so

[1] Dropmore I. 18.

incompetent a successor. His gloomy forebodings were only too soon justified. Of the long list of merchant Governors of the fort, Fraser seems to have been the most incapable. He was an absolutely hopeless President. The insults and indignities to which he was promptly subjected not only by the Mogul's chief officers, but also by the Nawab Sadatulla Khan and every petty ruler in the Carnatic, were a striking contrast to the respect which they had one and all paid to his predecessor. In the first few weeks of his Governorship he was able to report to the Court the receipt of further concessions from Sadatulla Khan, who had succeeded Daud Khan, and had probably not yet heard of Pitt's departure. In reply the Court wrote to him: "This we take to be the effect of your good conduct, and President Pitt's influence with the great men; and shall be glad you, our present President and Council will follow in the same steps, which is now so much the easier because the path is ready trodden[1]." Easy as it might seem to these gentlemen in Leadenhall Street to follow in Pitt's footsteps, poor Fraser found it as impossible a task as Penelope's suitors did the bending of the bow of Ulysses. Within a very short time he got into trouble at Vizagapatam, where two native rulers proceeded to besiege the Company's factory. The following extracts from the Court's letter[2] of the following year disclose very clearly Fraser's incompetence and lack of foresight in this affair:

"First we observe that the Chief has strangely erred in his politics (not to say worse); that he having by his former frequent letters advised us what he had then foreseen, as what might be the result and issue of not paying Mr. Holcombe's old debt to Fuckerla Khan, as the event now proves,—that the Chief in that case should not have sooner and earlier got sufficiency of provisions

[1] Hedges 3. 123. [2] Wheeler 2. 137.

for the use of their Garrison, at least until the monsoon should serve for our sending them supplies hence."

"Secondly, That the Chief should supply Nabob Habib Khan and Fuckerla Khan with so large a quantity of gunpowder and lead, when the said Nabobs and Chief were on so precarious terms; and not only so, but by their genaral letter of the 27th July last write us to send them 30 Candy of Powder and 20 Candy of lead for a further supply to the said Nabobs, notwithstanding the frequent cautions we gave them, or without considering that they were strengthening the hands of the said Nabobs, who were then contriving of the means and ways of laying that siege, they have since formed against the Factory."

"Thirdly. It being now the Northerly monsoon, it is strange that the Chief should not have wrote to Bengal to the President and Council there to be supplied with whatever they wanted."

This misfortune was soon followed by others. Serope Singh, the Rajah of Gingi, waylaid and detained as prisoners two of the officers of the Company's slender garrison of Fort St David, and treated them with great barbarity. The only action taken by Fraser on this outrage seems to have been to send Serope a present of 200 pagodas. On this occasion the Court's comment was as follows: "We don't at all like the Account given us in your 50th and 51st Paragraphs about Rajah Syrrup Sing's detaining Lievtenant Hugonin and Ensign Ray, and a present of Two Hundred Pagodas given for their releasement, which thô taken the men are where they were. Had the like case happen'd in the late President's time, he would have recover'd them both at a tenth part of the Money, or rather the Rajah would never have dared to attempt the surprising of them[1]."

Damaging as both these mishaps must have been to the English prestige in the Carnatic, they were insignificant as compared with the liberties which Sadatulla Khan next proceeded to take with the new Governor. Sadatulla was a far less formidable

[1] Hedges 3. 122.

antagonist than Daud Khan, Pitt's old enemy. He had greatly reduced his military expenditure; and was contented with a far smaller force than Daud had kept up[1]. In all he seldom had more than 500 horse under his command; and his example in this respect had been followed by the petty chiefs in the neighbourhood. Notwithstanding this he had the audacity to send an impertinent direction to Fraser, ordering him to give up not only the five outlying villages lately ceded to the Company by Daud and the Mogul, but also the three townships of Egmore, Tandore and Pursewaukum, which had been granted to the Company years before during the Presidency of Governor Yale, and had ever since remained in the undisputed possession of the Company. It is not difficult to imagine the contempt with which this preposterous command would have been treated by Pitt, who was the last man in the world likely to let go anything he had once laid his hand upon. Fraser's reply to it was a rambling argumentative letter[2], mainly devoted to an exposure of the private affairs of a native, whom he calls Yeavellapa, whom he seems to have regarded as having been the author of this mischief, and whom he denounces as "that plague of the poor and cockatrice of all venom." "Yeavellapa," he says, "deals treacherously with Madras, a place that he is so much beholden to, where he stores up so much paddy and grain to await a scarce and dear season, to increase the misery of the poor: and borrows large sums of money at the same time to pay his rent at the time due, else he must have been necessitated to sell at the market price." This charge, calculated to raise the astute dealer in question in the estimation of Sadatulla rather than to injure him, was accompanied by an appeal to the Nawab

[1] Wheeler 2. 191, 192 Wheeler 2. 129—131.

"to do nothing misbecoming so wise a man in so great a post," and an expression of Fraser's earnest hope that his opponent "will keep the King's peace by not committing any manner of hostility"; and "then you and I," he says, "may come to have a better understanding at least till I hear from the Great Zulfikar Khan to whom I am now going to write, and have his answer." The only answer vouchsafed to this humble appeal was a curt order from Zulfikar Khan to give all the villages up, which appears to have been complied with without any effort to retain them. This last exhibition of Fraser's impotence seems to have been too much for the Court, and he was promptly superseded. Had he remained any longer in office, his next step might possibly have been to surrender the fort itself.

Misfortunes seldom come singly. Within a few days after Pitt's departure from Fort St George the news reached him of the death of Mr Ralph Sheldon, the President of the Bengal Council, who had been appointed to that post on his recommendation. "'Tis certaine," he had written to Raworth in September 1707, "your affairs have suffered in Bengall for want of a President. Mr. Hedges has been and is now with you. I had allways an esteem for him: but to deale impartiall in the matter and have no other in my eye than the good of the trade, I must be for Mr. Sheldon, for there is no comparison to be made between 'em for that employ[1]."

After Addison's funeral there was nothing to keep the ex-Governor at Fort St George any longer. It must have been pain and grief to him to remain a private resident amongst the men over whom he had ruled so long and so absolutely. In anticipation of his departure, he had wound up his own private trade some years before. Robert Pitt had been

[1] Hedges 3. 112.

conveyed home on a ship, the *Loyal Cooke*, bearing the name of his father's firmest friend. His father had now to go on board of another ship, named after his mortal enemy. He came off with his belongings on the 21st of October, leaving Mr Edward Montague, Fraser's second in command, acting temporarily as President, in the absence of Fraser at Fort St David. Montague, anxious to get rid of the troublesome Seaton, decided to send him home a prisoner on board the *Heathcote*. Seaton, however, refused to leave his house, and had to be removed by a file of soldiers under the command of Ensign Dixon.

Captain Tolson apparently by no means relished the prospect of having two such explosive gentlemen as Pitt and Seaton as his passengers during his long voyage home, and found a very simple way out of the difficulty, which resulted in Seaton's remaining behind at Fort St George. The following is the account of the episode given by the Ensign to the Council:

"According to orders I carried your prisoner Captain Seaton alongside of the Ship 'Heathcote,' and laying there some time I found no person appear to hand us a rope or any to assist us. Then I went on board and delivered your Honours and Councills order to Captain Tolson, desiring him to receive the prisoner. I informed him that the said prisoner was carried from the Sea Gate, and that he refused to come on board unless he were hoisted in. Captain Tolson replied that all his passengers came on board willingly, and would not hoist him in, nor suffer any body else to do it, nor would he overhale the last tackle in his ship, and that he would not suffer any gentleman lying alongside his ship forced on board or ill used. Captain Tolson asked the prisoner if he would come on board, which the said prisoner refused. Then the prisoner demanded of Captain Tolson, whether he had any further commands for him. Captain Tolson answered no. I waited for a note, but at last he told me I might go, for he would give me none[1]."

[1] Wheeler 2. 116.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## CONJUGAL ESTRANGEMENT

In the foregoing narrative of the more important events of Governor Pitt's official career at Fort St George, references to his family troubles have been omitted so far as has been found practicable. To have dealt with them as they arose must have entailed the interpolation of detailed explanations, which would have broken the sequence of events unnecessarily. For they had little, if any, bearing on his decisions and actions in any particular crisis. But his official difficulties during the whole of his protracted absence from England, involving as they did the constant frustration of his plans for returning home, had a very material bearing on his unfortunate estrangement from his wife and the quarrels of his children. It will be well at this stage of his life, whilst he is on his voyage back from India, to retrace, so far as the records enable us to do so, the origin and course of his unhappy domestic differences, and to explain the position awaiting him when he reached London.

When he had sailed from England for Madras in 1698 with his son Robert, there is no reason to suppose that he was not on excellent terms with his wife. Each owed much to the other. Their marriage had brought him into terms of intimacy with Vincent, greatly to the advantage of both men ; and his successes had placed her in a far better position than

she could have hoped otherwise to attain. On going out, he had left her the uncontrolled management of his affairs at home, making her his sole attorney, as according to her own account he had done on every previous occasion when he had left her[1]. For her guidance in the disposal of any merchandise he might send home from India, and the purchase and dispatch of the goods and bullion to be sent out to him from Europe for the carrying on of his private trade in the East, he had secured for her the services of two of his oldest friends, Samuel Ongley and Peter Godfrey, both of whom were members of the Court of the Old Company, and had been of great assistance to him in obtaining his appointment as Governor of Fort St George. For herself and her young family, which consisted at the time of her husband's departure of two sons, Thomas and William, and two daughters, Essex and Lucy, and which was increased a few months after his departure by the birth of a third son, John, she had a pleasant country seat, the manor house of Mawarden Court at Stratford, and apparently a residence at Blandford St Mary, with ampler means of living in comfort in both than were at that time possessed by most county families. For advice in the education of her sons, Thomas Curgenven was available, who had married one of her husband's sisters and had been headmaster of the two best schools in Dorset, the Blandford Free School and the school at Sherborne. Few women, whose husbands have been compelled to leave them to serve their country abroad, have remained in England in easier circumstances, or been treated with greater consideration and confidence by their lords.

For a while nothing seems to have occurred to mar the harmony of their separate married life. Mrs Thomas Pitt continued to live in comfort at

[1] Dropmore I. 36.

Stratford, whilst the Governor had his hands full of troublesome business in Madras. The terms on which they were with one another two years after his arrival there may be gathered from the following letters[1]:

"Feb 22nd 1700.

To Mrs. Pitt.

My dear

. . . . . .

Robin is not yet return'd from China, nor have I heard from him since May last from Batavia. I send you by Mr. Topp my good Tennant's Brother Severall things as per list enclos'd, a share of which I would have you distribute among my ffriends, and by him I send Essex a small diamond ring, and two small Stones to make Lucy something. In some of the Bales there is fine Betteelaes and chints, if you have Occasion or desire any Mr. Godfrey will deliver them to you.

Here comes on this Ship the Late Governor Higginson and his Lady, Capt Metcalfe and his, whome I would have you visitt, if in London,—here comes alsoe Mr. Pluymer, who will be assistant to you at all times in disposeing of any Diamonds.

I hope you look after my plantations, Gardens, &ca as I desir'd, that I may find 'em on my returne in a good Condition. My blessing to the Children, of whose education pray take great Care. My service to all our ffriends and relations, not forgetting Mr. Phillips and J. Humphrey, nor any of our neighbours worth remembering. My hearty love and affection to your Selfe, wishing us a happy meeting

Your affectionate husband, etc."

In another letter, dated the next day, he writes:

"This comes by my Lord Abingdon's son, who I suppose will be Sooner at London than any. My cocquet comes by Capt Metcalfe, in your absence directed to Mr. Peter Godfrey, Copy of whose letter I enclose to you, by which you'le find I have sent home Considerably this year, which God grant may arrive Safe, the produce is to be paid you. I would have you remember the poor of our Parish and St. Mary Blandford."

It would appear from the second of these letters that the Governor was sending home by the ship

[1] B.M. Additional MS. 22842, Nos. 78 and 83; Hedges 3. 62.

that took it a valuable consignment, which in the ordinary course of business would be disposed of by Godfrey and Ongley, who would pay the proceeds to his wife, whose duty as her husband's attorney it would be to see that the money was prudently laid out in accordance with his instructions and the advice given to her by Godfrey and Ongley, in the purchase of goods and bullion to be exported to India for the purposes of her husband's private trade there. The whole of the gains to be got by the Governor of Fort St George depended on this trade, for the success of which it was essential that he should receive as promptly and regularly as practicable full and clear accounts of the disposition of the merchandise which he had sent home, and a constant and well-selected supply of exports purchased with the produce of its sale. It is not difficult therefore to realise the anxiety with which he must have awaited the arrival of the precious goods and bullion on which he relied to enable him to carry on his business; the irritation with which he learnt after a considerable delay that they were not coming out to him; and his indignation at receiving nothing but the vaguest intimations of what was being done in the meanwhile with his intercepted working capital. Take as an example of the letters that began now to reach him, the following from his old friend Ongley[1], written on the 26th of February 1701, and probably brought to him by a ship by which he had hoped to receive from home a large consignment of bullion and European wares:

"Madame Pitts has advised me not to concerne you in any shipping on a double accompt, because Shipping turns to noe accompt, and the greater Reason is that She has occation for all the money in my hands to pay for Some land that she has bought, of which I suppose she will give you an accompt. I observe you order me to pay what Madame Pitts shall Requier of me, which order I must obey she haveing the Same from you."

[1] Hedges 3. 64.

Ongley's assumption that Mrs Pitt would give her husband an account of her expenditure of the moneys handed over to her does not seem to have been well founded. Writing on the 22nd of October 1701 to his brother-in-law Curgenven, the Governor says:

"My Wife has writt mee little or nothing to the purpose this year, nor has sent me nothing, tho' I positively order'd her. She writes me God knows what that she is about purchases, but not a word of what some has cost or others will cost. I have noe manner of Accompt of what I left her, what She has received or paid since, what I have hence sent her or what it Sold for, but all railing against one or other, which has very much expos'd my busyness and done me a great deal of prejudice. Soe that I find great inconveniences by trusting a woman with bysiness which I will avoid for the future[1]."

The railings referred to in this letter seem to have consisted of abuse of Godfrey, amongst others. The following letter from Godfrey refers to some disputes with Mrs Pitt, in which the Governor seems to have taken his wife's side and to have written angrily to his old friend.

"London. 23rd July 1701.

. . . . . .

Unless I should write you what I have already done, that your Writings Signifyes little to one, who will doe but what Shee will, or advise you what I hear, which I find Sowers you beyond what is usuall, therefore I shall only tell you I was not the author of the meannesse of your Imployment or of your Son's Trip to the Jubilee, But was as much Surprised at it as you, or more, because it seemed to arrise from powers derived from you. As for my Going for Deal I shall bee as ready If my Company may be acceptable to wait upon your Lady thither, whenever shee will Imbarque for India......althô you seem to have a mean opinion of my sincere affection to you and yours I know no reason. I am sure my actions will justifye mee. But what I have been Misrepresented it is from those to whose temper you are noe Stranger, therefore methinks you should reflect on things before you despise one you have found as a friend; or is it you are jealous I have an esteem for your kinsman?" (Consul

[1] Hedges 3. 69.

John Pitt). "Consider and let me know wherein I have been wanting in respect or friendship to you. I think I cannot doe more for any than I have Endeavoured for your service. As for the Megrums, If I desir'd to enter a paper combatt you have given me handle enough, but I am for peace and soe shall say noe more, but pitty your misfortune that your &ca. Pray what is it reignes in India that you are all upon the Quarrels[1]?"

This letter has an honest ring about it, which should not be overlooked. The Governor's reply in the following year shows that the controversy between these two old comrades over Mrs Pitt's eccentricities had not permanently shaken their friendship. "I always," he writes, "esteem'd old friends as old gold, and in these matters I am not given to change. Those that have known mee longest must say that 'twas never my temper to bee quarrelling and jangling, nor to purchase any one's friendship upon dishonourable termes[2]."

In the face of his wife's neglect to furnish him with proper business accounts and her persistent interception of his supplies, the Governor decided to deprive her of the control of his money affairs in England. Accordingly his son Robert, when he left Fort St George in October 1702, carried with him a revocation of his mother's powers, and a document appointing Sir Stephen Evans and himself to act in her place. It is unlikely that with his knowledge of the characters of his wife and son he took this step without serious misgivings. But he had practically no alternative. What with the shortage of remittances from England, and the purchase of the two great diamonds, one of which Robert was taking home, whilst the other had gone down in the *Bedford*, his available working capital in India must by this time have been grievously depleted. With his distrust of his wife's business capacity and his

[1] Hedges 3. 68. [2] Hedges 3. 78.

experience of her unwillingness to comply with his directions, it was impossible for him to entrust her with the custody and disposal of his great concern. He therefore showed Robert the letters he had received from England relating to her mismanagement, explained why she was now to be superseded, instructed him fully as to the proceedings which he and Evans were to take; and at the same time strictly enjoined him to be dutiful to her and loving to his sisters[1].

On reaching London, Robert, as we have seen, promptly married, according to his own account with his mother's consent[2]. His father, however, distinctly states that Mrs Pitt had told him that she had not seen the lady until after the marriage. Be this as it may, there is no reason to suppose that she objected to the marriage. For she gave the young couple, in her husband's name, a present of £1000, which he subsequently refused to pay. But it was not long before mother and son fell out. In one of his earliest letters to his father after his arrival in England, Robert reports, "Your affairs have been in all respects mismanaged[3]," and a month afterwards he sent out to India an account of a dispute which he had had with his mother in regard to the control of some property near Salisbury, which she claimed as hers by settlement. How far her mismanagement had been due to a lack of business capacity, and how far to pique and perverseness, seems doubtful. Writing to his brother-in-law Curgenven in December 1704, her husband says:

"Dear Brother,

I did not find my wife had done much towards Settling my Accounts, while from want of understanding, as well as some perverseness, She has not put them into a little confusion, for which Reason I resolve to hasten home[4]."

[1] Dropmore I. 5.
[2] Dropmore I. 7.
[3] Dropmore I. 10, 11.
[4] Hedges 3. 96.

It might have been well for their domestic happiness if he could have carried out this resolution. The reasons which kept him from doing so have already been explained. Meanwhile his resentment against her seems to have been as yet grounded solely on her mismanagement of his business and her failure to comply with his instructions in regard to them, and he seems still to have retained his conjugal affection for her. Writing to his son, he says[1]: "My love to your Mother, to whome I charge you all to be very Dutyfull, and my blessing to you all, and I hope you'le follow my Advices to you of Sticking close to your Studies, and take those good Courses I have Soe often recommended to you, which will be advantageous to your selfe and a comfort to me." Two months later he writes again: "I strictly injoyn you to be Dutyfull to your Mother and Loving to your brothers and sisters, and follow the good advices I have always given you.......I assure you 'tis noe small care that I am hourly under for your Welfare, and whereas I have and ever shall doe my part I hope you will yours. Give my Love to your Mother, my blessing to your Selfe, Brothers and Sisters, and Service to all friends." Up to this date there is no hint in his correspondence that he entertained any doubt of the propriety of his wife's private conduct. All the previous references to her in his correspondence with members of the Pitt family point to the conclusion that she had been living a well-regulated domestic life with her children, sometimes at Mawarden Court and sometimes at her residence in Blandford St Mary. One of the Governor's cousins, Captain John Pitt, who afterwards greatly distinguished himself as aide-de-camp to the Duke of Marlborough, by whom he was commissioned to bring home the despatches of the victory at Blenheim,

[1] Hedges 3. 82, 83.

writing to Fort St George in January 1702, says: "I am glad I was or can bee serviceable to your good lady and selfe, there is nobody without compliment more desierous of it. In my way the last Sumer to my quarter, I call'd at Stratford, and stayd fower days with Mrs. Pitt and pretty family, who were all in health and learne their books bravely[1]." Another cousin, Dr Robert Pitt, who had succeeded to the family practice at Blandford about the same time writes: "Dear Cousin, As the News of your Recovery was very wellcome to me and all your Friends, I can acquaint you that my Cozen and Miss Essex are both in perfect health." Another cousin, Thomas Pitt, Master in Chancery, reports in the same month: "Your Lady was a few dayes agoe at my house and looks as well as ever I saw her. You are a great way off, and have been a great while gon. I amongst the rest of your friends could wish that you were now to Returne. You have the satisfaction to have your Eldest Son with you. And it will be a great pleasure to you when you Return to find All your other children so well come on."

This pleasant state of things was soon brought to a close after Robert's return. The discord that arose between him and his mother rapidly grew worse and worse and extended to his sisters, who not unnaturally sided with their mother. It is easy to understand that Mrs Pitt bitterly resented being supplanted in the management of her husband's affairs by her son, and that she expressed her opinion on the subject to him and others in words which lost nothing of their acrimony and extravagance in their transmission to the Governor by Robert, and which led his father to write back angrily on one occasion: "If what you write of your mother be true, I think she is mad, and wish she were well secured in Bedlam; but I charge

[1] Hedges 3. 72, 73.

you to let nothing she says or does make you undutiful in any sense whatever." This latter injunction, as might have been expected, had no effect. Robert's temper was none of the best, and his consequential bearing and tactless proceedings in his newly acquired position his mother and sisters seem to have found insufferable. The Governor was inundated with complaints from him of his mother's and sisters' conduct, and with letters from them and others giving their versions of the numerous quarrels and misunderstandings that ensued. If we bear in mind the difficulty of discriminating at the other end of the world between the demerits of the disputants and the shortness of the Governor's temper, it is not surprising that he solved the problem by roundly abusing both sides. In the same letter in which he calls his wife a mad woman, he writes to Robert: "You cannot but know the reason why your sisters are not with you, as I have a letter from Essex, who resents your ill treatment of her, and so do I, who know your temper too well. Your brothers and sisters have no dependence on you, nor ever shall; and as my children behave themselves, one better than another, I shall consider them and no otherwise. Inclosed is a letter sent to me without a name, by which you will see what a character you have already got[1]."

Irritating as the news of these family wranglings must have been to the poor man, they were soon followed by still more disquieting tidings. Towards the end of the year 1704, his son informed him that his mother had taken a house at Bath, where she and her daughters resided during the greater part of the year. "My sisters are at Bath," he says, "with my mother and we seldom meet except in the country during summer. I always invite them to

[1] Dropmore I. 12.

pass the winter in London with my wife, in order that they may have the benefit of masters and the best society; but my civility is thrown away, they being for some unknown reason, set against me." Robert, when he wrote this, must have been well aware that it would be anything but pleasant news to his father to hear that his wife, who had already two country houses to live in, had taken another at Bath, which, if we may judge of it from contemporary writers, was one of the last places in the world that an absentee husband would have wished his wife and daughters to select for their residence. Those who know it only as it is to-day may find some difficulty in realising the reputation which it enjoyed in that age. It had lately become under Beau Nash, what it continued to be for the greater part of the eighteenth century, not only a resort for invalids, but the most fashionable watering-place of the day, the favourite rendezvous of the fast set, where all who cared to do so could indulge in unrestrained extravagance, gaiety, intrigue and dissipation. One writer, after describing in detail his own unedifying experiences there, sums it up thus: "In a word, 'tis a Valley of Pleasure, yet a Sink of Iniquity; nor is there any Intrigue or Debauch in London, but it is Mimick'd here[1]." Oliver Goldsmith, in his *Life* of Nash years afterwards, but before Sheridan had written his comedies, says of it, as it was at this time: "Scandal must have fixed her throne in Bath, preferable to any other part of the Kingdom." Students of the *Spectator* will remember Steele's account of the young man who, finding that his reputation for modesty and chastity was far from being a recommendation to the young ladies of his acquaintance, deliberately set himself to a carefully graduated course of dissipation,

[1] *A Step to the Bath, with a character of the place*, London, 1700.

commencing as a freshman the first year with two small rural spas, Astrop and Bury, and proceeding in his second year to Epsom and Scarborough in succession. "In my third year," he says, "I aspired to go to Tunbridge; and in the autumn of the same year made my appearance at Bath. I had now got into the Way of Talk proper for Ladies, and was run into a vast acquaintance among them, which I always improved to the best advantage. In all this Course of Time and some Years following I found a Sober, Modest Man was always looked upon by both Sexes as a precise unfashioned Fellow of no Life or Spirit. It was ordinary for a Man, who had been drunk in good Company or had passed the night with a wench to speak of it next day before Women for whom he had the greatest Respect. He was reproved perhaps with a Blow of the Fan, or an Oh, Fie, but the angry Lady still preserved an apparent Approbation in her countenance. He was called a Strange, wicked Fellow, a Sad Wretch; he Shrugs his Shoulders, swears, receives another Blow, swears again he did not know he swore and all was well." The reputations of Nash, then in his youthful prime, and his friends, who set the tone of the society there, were such that self-respecting women of rank were chary of meeting them. Lady Strafford, writing from London to her husband Lord Strafford, when ambassador at the Hague, says of his sister-in-law:

"I believe sister Wentworth is more extravagant than ever for fear the world should think she is mortified at your being marred, but she can't govern her passions so much but that the world takes notis of her uneasyness. She is talked on for Mr. Nash and Coll. Joslain more than ever. I wonder her husband can be so imposed on as to be pleas'd with there company....... As for scandall, the town has now a great deal at Lady Mary Gore's cost, tho' som says she desarves more then is said of her. At the Bath there was a particular set of company, six men and six women that mett two or three times a week to dance, and

won night All the candles were blown out, and the men was very rude, upon which Mr. Gore desired her to goe no more into that company, but she told him she would, and if citizens pretended to marry quality they must take it for their pains.......I have heard an old saying there is no catching old birds with chaffe, so I hope I am to old for sister Wentworth to play me any of her tricks, tho' I must say she has laid as many trapps to draw me into her gang of company, as ever anybody did; but she has never accomplish'd her design, for I have been but twice to see her since I cam to town and then I did only make her a formall visit. She has invited my sisters and I to play at cards with her of twelveday, and since I here there is to be Mr. Nash and a great many more of her fellows, so I don't intend to say anything tell the day comes, and then I'll send her word I have a great cold, and so can't wait on her. I am not so much a fool but I can see through her designs, for she thinks if she introduces all her folks to me, if the world reflects on her for keeping such company, she'll say that I keep there company as well as she. I thinke my brother the greatest fool that ever was, for he is the fondest thing of the world of Nash and delighted with all his wife dos[1]."

Extravagant entertainments, gaieties, intrigues and scandal were by no means the only dangers that awaited lady visitors at Bath who desired to pose as up to date. Large fortunes were habitually lost by both sexes there at gaming. Nash, who had no means of his own beyond the presents he received from his admirers, was enabled to keep up a splendid appearance at this stage of his career, mainly by the exercise of his talents as a gamester, supplemented by the royalties which he extracted from the proprietors of the gaming tables in the town. Of all vices, none was dreaded more by Governor Pitt than gaming, and with good reason. "Whenever I am certain," he writes to his son Robert on one occasion, "that any of my children game, I will by all that is good disinherit them," a threat which he did not hesitate to carry into execution in after years in the case of his youngest son, John[2]. The news that his wife and

[1] *Wentworth Papers* 219, 234.

[2] Dropmore I. 21.

daughters had left their country homes and were now living at one of the head centres of gaming must have been as alarming to him as it would be for a thrifty man of the present day to hear that his wife and daughters had settled down at Monte Carlo. "It was a surprise to me," he writes, "to hear that all my family who I left in a pleasant habitation were removed to the Bath, and there spending my estate faster than I got it[1]." The following seems to have been the provision which he authorised Evans to allow her at this time: "You may permitt my Wife to receive the income of my land at Old Sarum and St. Mary, Blandford, in Dorsetshire, to maintaine her, her two daughters and three sons, two of the latter I believe may be come away, if Soe I desire you to disburse their maintenance, in which pray be thrifty, and charge them Soe too, or I'le put 'em to short allowance when I come home, and if my Wife draws any bills upon you, I order 'em to be returned, and not a penny paid, for I will not allow it in my account[2]." Later on, he writes: "I still positively order that my wife and daughters live on the income of my land[3]."

These and similar passages in his correspondence have been cited as proofs of his inordinate love of money. But it can hardly be contended that he had not good reason to fear that his hardly earned wealth might soon be dissipated if he allowed his wife and daughters a free hand at Bath. To what extent, if any, they were victimised by the card-sharping fraternity of the place does not appear. But that Mrs Pitt was not altogether as prudent as Lady Strafford in shunning the fast set, and that her reputation was compromised by her intimacy with some man whom she met there, is clear from the reports of her indiscretions which were sent out to her husband in India,

[1] Dropmore I. 4. [2] Hedges 3. 93. [3] Dropmore I. 41.

not only by her son but also by other good-natured friends. "I have heard from others," her husband writes to Robert in September 1706[1], "the truth of which I cannot question, that that scoundrell rascally villain has been too intimate in my family, to the prejudice of my honour and their reputation, for I make noe distinction between women that are reputed ill and such as are actually soe; wherefore I have discarded and renounced your mother for ever, and will never see her more, if I can avoid it." Writing two years later to his son, he says: "Mr. Shipman hinted to me that your mother had been guilty of some imprudence at the Bath...let it bee what it will, in my esteem she is noe longer my wife, nor will I see her more, if I can help it[2]." No useful object can now be gained by raking up the ashes of this long-forgotten scandal and endeavouring to ascertain its foundation. We shall probably not be far wrong if we assume that the poor lady's peccadilloes, whatever they were, were greatly magnified by the local scandalmongers before they reached the ears of Robert and her husband's staid merchant friends, who passed them on in horror by way of warning to her husband. But whatever they may have been, they undoubtedly were the ostensible reason of his permanent separation from her. That he did not cast her off without resources is evident from the following letter, which she wrote to her son Robert from Mawarden Court after leaving Bath:

"Tho' your sisters' allowances are too small, yet I hope nither that nor the smallness of thare fortuns at present, will ever make them think of marrying below what has bin, and is yet offered to me for them: it being in my power to ad considerably to both when I pleas, as I can show under your father's own hand to me, tho' in a very surly od sort of a way: but I can overlook that since I gain my main point. I thank you for

[1] Dropmore I. 23. [2] Dropmore I. 39.

your kind offer as much as if I could accept it; but having had a house of my own above this 20 year, resolve to git a good one now to my mind, so desire you will let me have the refusall of yours, if not allready promised. If it be, then I designe to have either Lady Betty Suthwall's in the Pell Mell or Sir Thomas Scipworth's at Twitnam, or brother Douglasses at Ham, all which places I like, and hear they are to be let. Your father's genourous alowance to me will serve to pay rent, and for the rest he shall find that I can live upon the aire as well and better than ever I did in my life, for I wont disgrace him by living meanly no longer; and since he dont know what is fit for me to have and do, he will know that I do who was always most saving when allowed most liberty. And since the alowance is his own nameing, I am able to let him see that after being his sole attorney for near 20 year upon all occasions, that I did when it was in my power do what I hope he will be wiser than ever provoke me to put into execution, by any more unjust or unreasonable useage, for nothing elce shall ever drive me to it. So that I now designe what is barely necessary with all imaginable thrift: but I will have a good house, in order to which I hope to see you at Forty" (Hill) "in a week in my way to Bernet" (Barnet), "and discourse this and some other matters fairly[1]."

What the threat in the latter part of this letter means is far from clear. The letter is endorsed by her son, "My mother's letter about her power to embroil my fathers affairs."

In November of the same year Robert writes to his father: "My sisters continued to reside with my wife till last month, when they went to live with my mother, who has a house upon the Upper Terrace of St. James's Street. My mother has given up to them for dress the £200 a year which you allow her, having sufficient of her own to maintain herself and them[2]." It would seem from this that Mrs Pitt had ample means of her own. £200 a year in those days was equivalent to at least £1000 now.

How deeply her husband was moved by the rumours of his wife's incontinency is evidenced by the savage tone of the letters which he addressed to

[1] Dropmore I. 35.
[2] Dropmore I. 38.

Robert by the same mail, in which he announced his intention never to see his wife again.

"What hellish planet is it," he asks, "that influences you all, and causes such unaccountable distraction that it has published your shame to the world; which has so affected me that I cannot resolve what to doe.......Have all of you shook hands with shame that you regard not any of the tyes of Christianity, humanity, consanguinity, duty, good morality, or any thing that makes you differ from beasts, but must run from one end of the Kingdome to the other, aspersing one another and aiming at the ruine and destruction of each other? that you should dare to doe such an unnatural and approbrious action as to turne your mother and sisters out of doors? for which I observe your frivolous reasons and was astonished to read them; and I no less resint what they did to your child at Stratford. But I see your hand is against every one of them, and every one against you, and your brother William to his last dying minute. How do you thinke this has chagrined me and what anxious and desperate thoughts it has brought into my mind and damp'd my desire of ever seeing you more, or any of you all, for I can promise myself noe comfort of you[1]."

His son William, to whom he refers in this letter, had recently died of the smallpox.

"Not only your letters, but all I have from friends are stuffed with an account of the hellish confusion that is in my family, and by what I can collect from all my letters the vileness of your actions on all sides are not to be paralleled in history. Did ever mother, brother and sisters study one another's ruine and destruction more than my unfortunate and cursed family have done? and I wish you had not had the greatest share in it, for I cannot believe you innocent. This has so distracted my thoughts, staggered my resolutions, broken my measures, that I know not what to resolve upon, nor in what part of the world to seeke for repose. What I have fateagued for after this fashion and lived so many years in exile from my country and friends (I had enough to subsist on and that very handsomely too), but to make my children easy in their circumstances and mee happy in their company; and haveing by God's blessing acquired such a competency as I never expected or could hope for, soe as that I should have been able to establish a family as considerable as any of the name except our kinsman

[1] Dropmore I. 20.

G(eorge) P(itt of Strathfieldsay); and now to have all blasted by an infamous wife and children. It is such a shock as man never mett with, and whether I shall overcome it, or sink under it, God knows. Is this the way to invite mee home? When I am well assured you are all of you thoroughly reformed I may think of it; but as matters stood at the writing of your letters, I think your company hell itselfe. I cannot but thinke of your turning your mother and sister out of doors, and your frivollous pittiful excuses for it: and I think their resentment just, and remember it will be a caution to somebody else when he arrives. You say your house has two rooms of a floor, and a closett, and as I suppose four or five storeys high. It was very hard you could not spare them one storey. I should have done it to your wife and children, had they been twice as many.......Remember this action will stick to you as long as you live, and I noe less resent and think ill of those who turned the poor child out at Stratford. Then it is said that in all companies you expose your brothers and sisters, who ought to conceale their faults and support their character! It is ill to do any such thing to either, more espetially your sisters whose reputation ought to be as dear to you as your life; and I would rather you would cutt their throats and mine too than you should doe any *such* thing, or have as much as a thought to their prejudice. What makes you quarrel with them? Is it that you would have mee thinke you are the Saint of the family? Noe, I know you too well and parted with you, when you were at man's estate but left them all poor innocent children. I have various thoughts of all your actions, and how barbarously and inhumanelike you treat each other. Will dyed with complaints in his mouth against you. It is much that no one should be of your party, or it may be the designe is that I should discard them all, that soe I might be the better able to contribute to the supporting of your extravagances?...... You say my great concerne is the wonder of the world. Soe is the confusion in my family.......You have all put me to a vast trouble in reading and answering your long letters, stuffed with nothing but confusion, and of such a nature as have very much disordered me to the great prejudice of my affairs; therefore I conjure you all to reforme or never let me hear more from you; soe conclude this letter, that for ever cursed be the children of mine that love not one another, and give their utmost assistance to each other on all occasions[1]."

This uncontrolled outburst of parental wrath and disgust seems to have brought his children for a

[1] Dropmore I. 22.

while to their senses more effectually than the most affecting homily on the beauties of brotherly and sisterly love could have done. For it elicited in due course a joint letter from them all, expressing their sorrow for their unnatural discords and a resolution to live in harmony for the future[1].

It is unlikely that their father either expected or received any similar expression of contrition from his wife. She, like her husband, had a temper of her own, and was by no means inclined to take his insults tamely. It was as impossible for her to sue for his forgiveness as it was for him to forgive her. Long protracted absence and a sense of mutual wrong had done their work. They never came together again, nor, so far as appears from their correspondence, did either of them express any desire whatever to do so.

[1] Dropmore I. 35.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## ROBERT PITT

ROBERT PITT must have been about twenty-four years old when he came back from India in charge of the great diamond, and to supersede his mother in conjunction with Sir Stephen Evans in the management of his father's affairs at home. He seems to have brought with him, according to his own account, some £6000, gained in the China trade in which he had been given through his father's influence very exceptional opportunities of making money. For some years before his return he had been anxious to get back to England, having little taste for trade, in which apparently he never embarked again. Nor does his father seem to have wished him to try his luck a second time in the East. Writing to Evans in February 1705, he says: "I observe what you write of my Sone talking of comeing out in a Sepparate Stock Ship and going into a Mann of Warr. I hope 'tis but talk, and that he will remaine at home till my arrivall[1]." It was necessary for the carrying out of the Governor's plans that his son should remain at that time in England; but it is clear that he possessed neither the qualifications nor the habits that would have been likely to make him a good man of business. What his father wished him to do had been indicated in the memorandum given him on leaving India and in subsequent letters[2]. He was to take over with

[1] Hedges 3. 98.

[2] Dropmore 1. 5.

Evans the responsible duty (no slight one for so young a man) of managing his father's money affairs in England, and the education of his brothers and sisters; to keep on good terms with them and his mother; to write to Fort St George regularly "by all conveyances whatever, overland; Surat or any other way," advising of all public and private occurrences concerning his father's interests, and especially of the proceedings of the Directors of the Old and New East India Companies, and their inclinations towards his father; and lastly to look after the management of the family estates. These duties of themselves if properly discharged would have absorbed the greater part of his time. At the next Parliamentary election he was to take his seat as member for Old Sarum. In the meanwhile he was to keep his own private fortune intact, and to improve his education[1]. "If nothing presents, which is advantageous to you," his father writes to him in November 1703, "I should advise you since your Years will admit of it, to enter your Selfe in the Inns of Court, and goe to Oxford for 3 or 4 years, and Stick Close to your Studies, which I would Chiefly have to be Civill Law, and if possible too make Your Selfe Master of fortyfication and Gunnery, and I hope the little experience you have allready had in the World will not only render these accomplishments necessary, but desireable by you."

These were his instructions. We have already seen how some of the more important of them had been ignored; how, although he had arrived in London some time in May 1703, he had not sent his father any detailed account of the safety and disposal of the great diamond until December in that year; and how he was soon seriously embroiled in violent quarrels with his mother and sisters. Nor was this

[1] Hedges 3. 83.

all. He seems to have taken little, if any, pains to keep in close touch with the East India House. Mr John Styleman, one of his father's most faithful supporters, in a letter in which he informs Governor Pitt that he has made it his business to defend him there on all occasions, writes in December 1704: "I am sorry I have had so little correspondence with your son Mr. Robert Pitt. Though I waited on him at his first coming home, I have never had the honour of seeing him at my poor house. He has always been very shy of me, for what reason I cannot imagine. I pray God the character you will receive of him from his friends be such as may answer your expectations[1]."

It is to be feared that Styleman's case was by no means an exceptional one. Writing to his son two years later, the Governor says: "You do not write one word of any of the Company as to their being well affected or otherwise to me, nor have any of them said one word about you, so that I believe you are wholly strangers to one another. My interest lies at the East India House, which you should have always attended to, and been very vigilant that nothing passed to my prejudice. But I perceive that you have not minded anything of it, for which and other of your actions, I think that no son in the world deserves more to be discarded by a father[2]."

Within a few weeks of reaching London, Robert had married the daughter of Lady Grandison, who seems to have made him an excellent wife, young, good looking, accomplished and well connected. She brought him £2000 on her marriage, so that their united fortunes at that time amounted, according to his own account, to £8000. His father put them down at £10,000, a very reasonable competency for a young

[1] Dropmore I. 12. [2] Dropmore I. 24.

married couple, considering the value of money in those days. Robert seems to have thought otherwise. On announcing his marriage to his father he says that he trusts the latter will assist them, adding that he hopes "to obtain some genteel appointment by the intercession" of his wife's relatives, a hope that was never realised. He took a house in Golden Square; and in the first few years of his married life encroached considerably on his capital. Writing in December 1704, to his father, he says: "I hope that the good accounts you have received of my marriage have induced you to approve of it, and that you will send your blessing to your little grand daughter Harriet, born in May last, of whom I have presumed to name you godfather. My dependence on your love and generosity has made me endeavour to put myself on a footing in the world becoming your son; but without your support I must soon sink under the pressure of my own narrow fortune[1]." It would seem that this was not the first application of this nature which he had made to his father. For whilst this letter was on its way out to India his father wrote to Evans of him on the 5th of February 1705: "He has wrote me to inlarge his fortune, which I take to be considerable, as mention'd to you in a former letter, not less than ten thousand pound, besides he is qualify'd for any manner of employ, but if you see him streighten'd, and that I am in Cash, Scruple not the leting him have five hundred or a thousand pound, but let him give a receipt to repay the same to my Cash, and when I come home I shall not be wanting to doe what becomes an Indulgent ffather, if he deserves it[2]." At the same time he had written to Robert: "I have sent nothing to your wife but a letter, because I intend to follow speedily. Remember, both of you, that good

[1] Dropmore I. 13.

[2] Hedges 3 98.

management is as necessary to preserve an estate as to raise one. Stick close to your Studies, so as to make yourself master of common and civil law, and preserve what you know of mercantile and maritime affairs[1]."

Early in 1705 Robert entered Parliament as member for his father's seat at Old Sarum. Following as they did closely on his complaints of his narrow fortune, his election expenses came as a great shock to his father[2]. "When I hear," he writes, "in what manner you went down to Old Sarum against the election, sent down a man cook some time before, coach and six, five or six in liveries, open house for three or four months, and put me to about £500 charge. Where was the need of this? It never cost me more than £10, which was for a dinner the day of election. Your mothers and your extravagance has begot me no few enemies at the East India House, and had I not taken care to have engaged them by my good services, I could not have held the employ half soe long.......All your actions seem to be the produce of a hot head and giddy braine. You are got to the expensive end of town, where money melts like butter against the sun, and your acquaintance chargeable; whereas if you kept company with my old friends and adhered to their advice, you would have avoided many of those inconveniences that now you are groaning under; but they were all scorned and despised as not fit company for you, who fancy yourself wiser than your teachers and your father too."

The Governor has been accused of too great fondness for money. But it is no confirmation of this view of his character that with five other children to provide for, and at a time when his working capital

[1] Dropmore I. 14.

[2] Dropmore I. 24.

had been seriously reduced by the purchase of two great diamonds and the failure of his wife to send him out his remittances, he should at the time have been dismayed at the rate at which his eldest son was living at the West End on what he was pleased to call "a becoming footing." To have encouraged him to go on spending his money after this fashion would have been a cruel kindness. For at his age, and with his notions of the style of living that became a son of the owner of the greatest diamond in Europe, there would in all probability have been no limits to his expenditure, if it had been allowed to continue unreproved. Nor was the Governor's fear that the extravagance of Mrs Pitt and his son would be injurious to him at the East India House by any means an imaginary one. It was most undesirable that at this critical time they should be flaunting their wealth as they were in the sight of the Company, who were likely to regard with suspicion any of their servants who had made large fortunes in India. The Directors were only too disposed to suspect that their servants' gains were their loss. It was very difficult to make them understand that men who brought home little with them, because they were unsuccessful in their own private trade, were not necessarily the best qualified to carry on their masters' business. Writing home to his brother a generation before, Streynsham Master, the only merchant Governor of Fort St George comparable in ability to Governor Pitt, had noted this propensity on their part. He says: "I have observ'd our Company are very ungratefull and cruell to a man that hath got an Estate in their Service, altho' he have done them a hundred times more Service[1]." Gough and Braddyll were now doing their best to induce the Directors of the United Company to believe Governor Pitt had

[1] Hedges 2. 244.

been using their funds for the purposes of his own private trade; and he had expressed a hope that his son would give them the lie on his arrival in London. Whether Robert had contradicted this rumour or not is uncertain: but there can be no doubt that his ostentatious extravagances following on those of his mother at Bath were, to say the least, not calculated to discredit it.

The Governor had cherished the ambition that his son would distinguish himself in Parliament. Before hearing of his election, he had written to him:

"There are some now at the head of the Government who contrary to their own expectations have acquired high position by hard study and diligence in business; and you can only hope to make a figure in the world by using the same means. If you are in Parliament, show yourself on all occasions a good Englishman, and a faithful servant to your country. If you aspire to fame in the House, you must make yourself master of its precedents and orders.......Avoid faction; and never enter the House prepossessed: But attend diligently to the debate; and vote according to your Conscience; and not for any sinister end whatever. I had rather see any child of mine want than have him get his bread by voting in the House of Commons[1]."

The earlier reports that reached India of Robert's first experiences of Parliamentary life may have given his father some satisfaction. Sir Gilbert Dolben writes to him:

"I am glad to observe Mr. Pitt's diligence and integrity in Parliament, wherein I doubt not but he will in a little time become considerable, since his parts and application cannot fail of rendering him knowing in the business of the House of Commons. He already attempts to speak where it is proper, and will succeed very well, as soon as he shall have overcome the maiden modesty of a new member. I tell him he is one of the happiest men of my acquaintance, being eldest son of a good and rich father, and having an excellent wife. I must declare I do not know a more accomplished person than Mrs. Pitt. It is a great dispute with those who have the pleasure of conversing with her, whether

[1] Dropmore I. 18.

her beauty, understanding or good humour be the most captivating; and I am much pleased to hear her husband frequently express a just sense of her merit and his own happiness[1]."

Any pleasure which the Governor may have derived from this appreciative report of his son's early Parliamentary career and the charming character of his wife, must have been seriously discounted by the news that reached him that his son had joined the Tory party, who were now in opposition.

"I have often been thinking," he writes a year afterwards, "what box you have gott into in the House of Commons. I am affraid you are one of those chilldren that are awakened with the rattle that is constantly naming the Church of England, for which noe man have a greater veneration than myselfe: but I know it is often named within those walls to bring over a party, the consequence of which has been generally dangerous to the State. And it is the custom of old stagers to make use of such forward fellows as yourselfe (as the fox did the catt's foot) to trye the temper of the House. It is my advice that you speake seldome, and then to the purpose; and make it your busyness to be well versed in the orders of the House; and doe nothing that is dishonourable on any account. I cannot immagine what has made you an anti-courtier, when wee are sure wee have a Queen that is in no other interest than that of England...... I conclude this with recommending for your perusall a book entitled *Miscellanies* by the late Lord Marquis of Hallifax. The first part you and your sisters would doe well to read and practice: and out of the severall other heads it treats of, you may furnish yourself with such honourable notions of the affairs of your Countree that may render you serviceable thereto, and how to avoyed the reflections on those that are otherwise[2]."

In the meanwhile Robert, getting no encouragement from his father to continue living beyond his means and eating into his capital, had found it necessary to retrench and give up his establishment at Golden Square. He had taken a house at Enfield, and had ceased to attend regularly at the House of Commons, as appears from a letter to his father, written in February 1707 by Robert Raworth, who says:

[1] Dropmore I. 17.

[2] Dropmore I. 27.

"You talk very freely of coming home next season, but Sir Thomas Cook and others here do not expect you. I must say, as I said in my letter of last year, that if you have got £200,000, or half of it, you ought to be content and come home to enjoy it. There was however another reason for your return then, namely the discord that ran high in your family, which I hear nothing of now. After writing to you last year I composed a new difference that arose, and shall always be ready to do any friendly office; but interfering between man and wife, or mother and children, is just like going between the bark and the tree, and therefore do not wonder that I am very tender in what I write. Your son has taken a large house at Enfield within four miles of mine; he has a great deal of wit, but wants solid wisdom. I have not seen him all this winter, for I hear he is much out of town, and does not give due attendance to the House of Commons, because all things run counter to his opinion and party[1]."

Raworth's estimate of Robert's abilities was probably not far wrong. That the young man could lay no claim to anything that could by any stretch of imagination be described as solid wisdom is abundantly clear. But that he was not slow-witted was probably the case. He could make a good impression on strangers, when he thought it worth while to do so. George White, who had been supercargo to Governor Pitt on his last interloping expedition, wrote of him about this time: "Your gentlemanly son, Mr. Robert Pitt, does indeed deserve the character of a very ingenious person of very quick parts[2]." He had already, as we have seen, impressed Sir Gilbert Dolben with a belief in his abilities. He seems to have been equally successful with Colonel Windham, who writes of him: "Your son, my opposite neighbour in Golden Square, lives very handsomely and in esteem with all good men, and also very happily with a good lady[3]"; and again after he had retired into humbler quarters: "I assure you that the character I gave your son is short of his deserts: and as for good husbandry though, to be free with

[1] Dropmore I. 27. [2] Dropmore I. 10.
[3] Dropmore I. 19.

you, at his first coming over, he set up an equipage of some expence, yet not of more than what his owne and a prospect of addition of fortune from soe good and able a father may well justifie; but all that is over, and now he does and for some time hath lived in as much retiredness as yourself would wish, and left this town; and my brother Wadham, who is a good judge, takes often occasion to applaud his management both in economy and business of trade[1]."

In his retirement at Enfield, where, as he had informed his father, he had taken a house and gardens with 50 acres of land about it for £60 a year, at a place called Forty Hill, twelve miles from London[2], Robert made a piteous appeal to his father in January 1708. "Our concord," he writes, "will be a comfort to you, when you return; and then I shall hope to be no longer the abandoned child of your family, the only one, who has no provision of bread made for him, his unfortunate wife, and three little children, although in the most need of all. I have been maligned to you as extravagant, without any grounds. My wife's fortune is untouched, and of my own I have spent £4000 in nearly five years of married life. If my marriage disobliged you at first, I am sure I have been sufficiently punished for it by daily anxieties of mind, which almost drive me to despair[3]."

Before this appeal reached India his father seems to have given him some assistance. For his mother, writing on the 1st of August 1708, says: "I was overjoyed that your father was at last pleased to do a little for you as well as for your brothers and sisters, and dont in the least question but that he will increes yearly his genourosity to you all[4]."

This appeal of Robert to his father calls for some

[1] Dropmore I. 33.
[2] Dropmore I. 25.
[3] Dropmore I. 34.
[4] Dropmore I. 35.

comment. So far from exonerating him from the charge of extravagance for which he says there are no grounds, it is practically a confirmation of it. For he admits that in five years he had got rid of two-thirds of the property which he had brought home. In considering his position, when he started on his married life, we must bear in mind the value of money in those days and the rate at which he had been living. The interest paid by Government on money borrowed by them during the reign of Queen Anne varied from £5 to £6 per cent. Robert therefore would have had no difficulty in getting safely from the joint property of himself and his wife something between £400 and £480 a year, an income equal to the average income of an esquire and in excess of the average income of any other class in the community with the exception of the nobility, the bishops, the baronets and the knights. And yet by his own showing during the five years in question he had lived so far in excess of his means that he had got rid of £4000 of his capital; and this notwithstanding the fact that his father, besides sending him valuable presents from time to time, had paid the whole expenses of his Parliamentary election.

His suggestion that his father had treated his brothers and sisters more liberally than himself was equally baseless, and his father was fully justified in resenting it. "You have no reason," he writes, "to grudge what I have done for your brothers and sisters, nor will I be tyed up by the direction of one child to what I shall doe for the others[1]." His two brothers, Thomas and William, had been placed by Robert himself at a Mr Meure's academy, near Soho Square, where he had informed his father in 1703 they had learnt "Latin, French and accounts, fencing, dancing and drawing." William was now

[1] Dropmore I. 42.

dead; and Thomas was apparently being still educated at this academy. At this time the only provision made for his two sisters seems to have been an allowance of £100 a year apiece so long as they remained unmarried; whilst Robert and Evans had been authorised to give them each a marriage portion of £6000, if they made suitable marriages. Robert had no reason whatever to complain of any of these arrangements. His father had given him a good education and an excellent start in life. It was entirely owing to his father's influence that he had had a very exceptional opportunity of acquiring a competence for himself at a very early age, and of returning from India when twenty-four years old with an independent fortune amply sufficient for his own immediate needs. He never seems afterwards to have earned anything or to have made any serious attempt to do so. Throughout his life he evidently entertained a very exaggerated idea of his own importance and merits, and very little respect for anybody's feelings except his own. He began by setting up an establishment at Golden Square, which had been recently built and was at that time inhabited by lords and ministers of state. Here, according to his friend and neighbour Colonel Windham, he lived "very handsomely." His explanation of this egregious act of folly was that he desired to live "in a becoming manner." His father had been content to live in a less expensive quarter of the town; but what was good enough for his parents with a large fortune was not good enough for himself and his wife with a small one. George White seems to have correctly described him as a "gentlemanly young man"; and as such he seems to have looked down with some contempt on trade, to which he owed all that he had in the world, and all he was ever likely to have. He not improbably entertained a

similar contempt for his father, whose rough and ready manners and plain common-sense must have sometimes been very repugnant to him. It is clear from his correspondence that he feared the Governor's wrath; but there is no indication in so much of it as has survived that he entertained the smallest affection for him or indeed for any member of his family. To the day of his death he was constantly at enmity not only with his sisters and brothers, but also with his mother, whom in one of his last letters he calls contemptuously "Old Madam," expressing his resolution "to push things to all extremities with her and all her gang be the consequence what it will[1]." As the eldest son, he seems to have considered himself entitled to look down upon the rest of the family; to have regarded the reversion to his father's riches as belonging as of right to him; and to have grudged any money spent on any one else as unjustifiable extravagance. Although lavish in his own expenditure, he was almost incredibly mean in his money dealings not only with his brothers and sisters but also with his own children. Years afterwards, when he had succeeded to the bulk of the family property, he took his son William severely to task, because his college washing bill came to three and sixpence a week[2]; and he cut down the allowance he had agreed to give his son Thomas for the grand tour on wholly inadequate grounds, at a time when he was himself in ample funds and could plead no such excuse as his own father had had for keeping down the expenses of his wife and children[3]. Apart from other considerations, there was one paramount object which the Governor had to keep steadily in view during his later years in India, as he clearly explained to Robert in one of his letters.

[1] Dropmore I. 86. [2] Rosebery 35, 36.
[3] Dropmore I. 80—83.

"Can you be so voyd of sense," he wrote to him towards the end of his Governorship, "as not to see what I have been doing ever since I was soe fortunate as to purchase that Grand Concern, which has been my utmost endeavour to acquire such a competency as to be able to provide for my family, without being put under a necessity to dispose of that affair at an under rate, or it would have been of as little advantage to me, as if I had partners therein: which I thank God I have effected, if no extraordinary misfortune happens: soe as soon as I come home and get my estate remitted, I will make you and your family easy, to which you should think of contributing, not as yet having heard that you have turned one penny in trade since you left me. Always spending and nothing coming in will soon waste a bigger estate than I have got, and what I want a good purchase for is chiefly to settle you[1]."

Realising as he must have done how essential to his interests it was to remain on good terms with his father, it seems a little strange that he should have taken the opposite side in politics. His father was a stubborn Whig, with a profound belief that all Tories were Jacobites. When Robert returned to England the Tories were in power; and as yet had won no conspicuous success in the war with France. In September 1704, the Governor had written home, "I like not the face of our public affairs abroad or at home. God send a miracle to save Old England at last." A month before these words were penned the miracle had happened. The battle of Blenheim had been fought and won. The next year he must have taken a rosier view of the political situation. For in the General Election of 1705, at which Robert had been elected for Old Sarum, the Whigs had come in with a large majority; and thenceforth the war

[1] Dropmore I. 42.

with France was prosecuted with vigour and success, greatly we may be sure to the satisfaction of the Governor; but it would appear to the disgust of Robert, who soon gave up regular attendance at the House of Commons because "all things ran counter to his opinion and party." Some good-natured friend seems to have informed the Governor about this time that his son was intriguing to bring the Pretender to the throne. For he writes to Robert from Fort St George, "It is said you are taken up with factious caballs and are contriveing amongst you to put a French kickshaw upon the throne againe, for no true English heart as the present Queen has (and pursues no other interest than that of her own nation) can please your party. If I find or hear of any child of mine that herds with any to oppose her present Majesty's interest, I will renounce him for ever[1]."

But what must constantly have annoyed his father during the whole of his stay in India more than any differences of opinion in party politics, was the persistent neglect of his son to send him detailed information as to the conduct of his business; to write to him regularly; or even to deliver the letters which had been entrusted to him to forward to relatives and friends. "I can't but resent," the Governor writes to his brother-in-law Robert Douglas, "the negligence of my Sone in not sending your letter, and I believe many others that I sent by him had the same fate[2]." "The Horsham and Anna left England," he writes to his son in February 1704, "in April, by neither of which I had a line from you." Again in 1708[3]. "The Despatch Galley arrived here a few days since from Bengal without a line from any of you. This is hard measure. How can a man govern

[1] Dropmore I. 39.
[2] Hedges 3. 94.
[3] Dropmore I. 14, 38.

himself in his affairs when his correspondents will not advise him what they receive or how they dispose of anything? for this is my case." Again, "What is the reason you have not advised me of the receipt or disposall of any goods I particularly consigned to you, though you have wrote me two or three letters since? Did you ever give me an account of my estates or any one affair that I have trusted you with? Since you left me, have you given me a plenary account of any particular affair?[1]" The references which he makes in his correspondence to these persistent omissions might be almost indefinitely multiplied.

Nor were they atoned for by any of the little unexpected attentions which so many fathers in exile occasionally receive from their children at home. He was constantly sending home presents, some of them of great value, to his relations and friends; and many of his friends sent him very welcome presents in return. But we hear of nothing of the kind reaching him from Robert, for whom he had done so much. "Have you ever," he asks him in one letter, "sent me one book of esteem, or as much as one drop of curious liquor, or any thing else delightfull in these parts?[2]" Such surprises as he did occasionally receive from his son in the way of his personal necessaries were of a less agreeable nature. When shoes and gloves, for which he had written home and which he was anxiously expecting, reached him, he was on one occasion unable to get them on. "The Gloves and Shoes are much too little for me," he writes, "and that my Son could not but know, who should send me every thing according to the list I gave him[3]." Sometimes the supply of his "wearable stores" as he calls them, seems to

[1] Dropmore I. 39.
[2] Dropmore I. 40.
[3] Hedges 3. 93.

have failed altogether. "Can find no box or chest," he writes, "of the hatts, perewigs, &ca you usually sent me so beleive it lost or spoilt. This is the effect of your great care of my necessarys which are not a little valuable when wanted. I here write you a little, but think the more[1]."

It is a pleasant feature in the Governor's character that he was himself more thoughtful of the needs of the poorer members of his family in England than his wife and children were of his.

> "I would desire you," he writes to Robert in January 1708, "to have some regard to your uncle and aunt Willis. She is the only sister I have alive, and if they have a daughter, I should take it kindly if your wife would take her into her house and give her a reputable education, which charge I will willingly allow you, and help her sons what you can, and remember that wee are not borne only for our selves nor has God Almighty bestowed this plentifull fortune on mee to give it only amongst my own children, but alsoe necessitous relations and friends, which I will not faill to doe for His glory, and my own comfort and happiness......If ever you intend to be great, you must be first good, and that will bring with it everlasting greatness, and without it it will be but a bubble blown away with the least blast. ......I assure you nothing soe chagrines me as when I have a doubt upon me of the well fare of my children[2]."

Willis and his wife were, it will be remembered, living at Blandford St Mary in the Rectory where the Governor was born. A year later he writes again, "I would have you put your uncle Willis's youngest son to a very good school in the country, and maintain him at my charge, because I intend to educate him and start him in the world[3]." Some years before he had written to his son: "I would have you send to Cousin Cradock at Blandford £20 to be given to cousins Thorne and Obourne, for I believe they are in great want; therefore hasten it to them[4]." And before this, we have a letter

[1] Hedges 3. 115.
[2] Dropmore 1. 35.
[3] Dropmore 1. 40.
[4] Dropmore 1. 26.

from him to his cousin Cradock: "I cant but remember the condition of Cozen John Forme and his sister Temperaunce Cockram, her name since married I have forgott, to each of which I have advis'd your son Richard to pay 'em ten pounds out of the produce of some small concernes I have consign'd him[1]."

Robert's quarrels with his family at last compelled his father to place his brothers and sisters under the care of their uncle Curgenven and George Pitt of Strathfieldsay, the head of the Pitt family[2]. It would perhaps have been better for all parties if he had done so earlier. It appears from a letter of Robert's, in January 1708, that Curgenven "having fallen blind" was incapable of discharging the trust thus reposed in him; but that "George Pitt had shown himself friendly and zealous for the good of the family above expectation[3]." It was no easy task that he had undertaken; but he seems to have discharged it to the satisfaction of all parties. It was probably by his influence that the Governor's children were induced to write to their father in the February of that year the joint letter of contrition expressing their sorrow for their unnatural discords and their resolution to live in harmony for the future; and that the Governor's daughters Essex and Lucy were persuaded to live with Robert at Enfield for a while. Unfortunately they seem to have found the position intolerable and went back to their mother after a few months. In November 1708, Robert writes to his father, "My sisters continued to reside with my wife till last month, when contrary to the directions of their guardians" (George Pitt and Curgenven) "they went to live with my mother, who has a house upon the Upper Terrace of St James'

[1] Hedges 3. 99. [2] Dropmore 1. 22.
[3] Dropmore 1. 34.

Street. They say that your letters give them liberty to choose where they will live: and there has been no quarrel or disagreement between us. My mother has given up to them the £200 a year, which you allow her, having sufficient of her own to maintain herself and them[1]." The Governor having expressed a desire that his youngest son John, now twelve years old, should go to the best school in England, arrangements were made to send him to Eton. A captaincy in the Duke of Ormond's troop of Guards was bought for Thomas, the second son, now twenty-two years of age. This appointment involved occasional attendance on the Queen's person; and as the expenses of the post exceeded the emoluments, the pay and allowances not exceeding 14 shillings a day, the guardians agreed to give him an allowance of £400 a year, his father having expressed a wish that he should not be "soe necessitated as to put him upon doing ill things or appear shabbily."

With the arrangements thus made for his two younger sons, the Governor seems to have been fully satisfied. But, as might have been expected, he strongly resented the decision of his two daughters to return to their mother, a step which it appears that George Pitt had vainly endeavoured to dissuade them from taking, knowing that it would be certainly construed by their father as an indication that they were siding with their mother against him.

[1] Dropmore I. 38.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE GOVERNOR'S RETURN TO ENGLAND

THOMAS PITT'S return to England was a very tedious business. It took him very little less than a twelvemonth to accomplish. The war with France still lingered on; and East Indiamen were prizes eagerly sought after. It was fortunate for him that he did not meet with the fate which befell poor Sir John Gayer that same year, whose vessel was attacked by four French ships off Cape Comorin, and taken after a desperate defence, in which Gayer was so seriously wounded that he died whilst a prisoner in the enemy's hands. With a view to minimising as far as possible the chance of such mishaps to the Company's ships in the Eastern seas, Pitt seems to have come to an amicable understanding with Jean Baptiste Martin, the famous Director General of the Royal East India Company at Pondicherry, with the object of preserving French and English trade in India from the ruin in which both might have been involved, if the two Companies had taken any active part in the war[1]. "It is well knowne," he writes, "wee had no force to preserve the Company's ships nor their forts from insults, for which reason I found out a way to establish such a correspondence as effected both, to the admiration not only of our owne inhabitants, but of all the Country about us, by which I (under God) preserved not onely 3,024 of their richest ships, but alsoe their settlements

[1] Dropmore I. 46.

from utter ruine." It would seem from this that Pitt and Martin, by far the most eminent Europeans of their generation in India, were each so anxious to preserve the interests of his own Company that they had agreed to work together for that end, though they must have been aware that in doing so they ran the risk of getting into serious trouble with their Home Governments. The alternative was the destruction of the trade of both; for neither was as yet strong enough to bring about the subjection of its rival. It seems to have been this irregular compact which Pitt's opponents had in mind, when they boasted that they had enough against him to take his life, but that they believed that the forfeiting of his estate might save him. This is the more likely because Pitt, in the same letter in which he alludes to this threat, writes, "When Madame Martin and other ladies were at Maderas, none of these wretches by their wives or otherwise would pay them common civility but kept a diary of those that did."

What the precise terms, if any, of the convention were can only be conjectured from its effect, which seems to have been that English East Indiamen enjoyed comparative immunity from capture in the Eastern seas, and that the French privateers and men-of-war contented themselves as a general rule with seizing such Dutch prizes as they could find there. It is clear, however, from the capture by the French of the ship in which Gayer was coming home that year, that it could not be relied upon as a complete protection of English vessels in that part of the world. It was of course no protection whatever except in Eastern waters; and during the three months that Pitt spent in the great cabin of the *Heathcote* before getting to the Cape, he had ample time to reflect over the important question, what course it would be prudent for him to take, for the remainder of his

voyage. His own personal experiences of capture by the French in the last war may have made him keenly alive to the desirability of avoiding any repetition of them. For he was now bringing home with him all his personal belongings at Fort St George, including, we may safely assume, a well selected assortment of diamonds and other marketable merchandise.

It would seem from his correspondence that he had for some time past had in contemplation the possibility of coming back to Europe in a Danish ship, which belonging to a neutral power would not be liable to capture by the French; and it is not improbable that he might have waited at Fort St George for an opportunity of doing so, if it had not been for his anxiety to get away from India as soon as possible after his deposition.

He reached the Cape on the 15th of January, and found there the Dutch General of Batavia with nine ships under his command. He says, "I waited on him, who gave me a very polish reception....What I heard was that hee was very angry that our ships were not taken by the French as well as theirs[1]." He also says, "At the Cape in October last, advices had arrived from Holland that we had been very barbarous to the Dutch in the West Indies. I do verily believe that if the fleet sailing from the Cape should meet with a French squadron, they would sacrifice every ship of ours, if it can be done without prejudice to themselves."

The consciousness of his questionable compact with Martin, and his suspicions of the resentment of the Dutch General, were not calculated to encourage him to remain on board the *Heathcote*, which was about to avail herself of the protection of the Dutch fleet. He therefore took the opportunity of a Danish ship being about to sail, to transfer himself and his

[1] Dropmore I. 45, 47.

belongings to her, leaving the *Heathcote* behind. "To prevent a long delay," he writes, "I took my passage thence on a Danes' ship"; and again "Hearing that there was no peace, nor any likelihood of it, and our ship being not a little cranke... induced me to take my passage in a neutrall ship from Tringombar." Other reasons which may have weighed with him in coming to this decision, may have been his desire to avoid the humiliation of being brought home on board a ship named after his mortal enemy; the apprehension that he might have to pay heavy custom duties on the property he had with him; and the hope that he might make more by selling so much of it as he cared to dispose of in Holland than he was likely to obtain for it in London. Four years before he seems to have entertained the same design, for he had written on the 16th of January 1706, "I hold to my resolution of leaving for England next September, and not knowing but that I may go to Holland from the Cape, would have you lodge letters for me there in good hands, with information as to whom I may trust anything of value[1]."

"My coming home in this manner[2]," he says in his letter to his son Robert from the Norwegian coast on the 30th of May, "will amuse them at the East India House, of which inform yourself and advise me.......As I may sell something considerable abroad, inquire what goods from Denmark, Hamburgh or Holland turn to good account in England, or how returns may be made to the best advantage; whether money is to be got by buying silver in Holland, and whether better in dollars or ingots: but be careful not to trust any one who will betray you to our Company, and that they do not intercept our letters." "Wee made," he goes on, "St. Hellina March 5, and Assention March 14.......Wee came about Shettland May 17, and the next day mett with a small Danes' vessell from Bergen bound for France, who told us of the warr betweene them and the Swede, when wee endeavoured to fetch that port, but when wee came in

[1] Dropmore I. 18. [2] Dropmore I. 46, 47.

with the land, found ourselves to the Southward about 10 English leagues, soe that the pylott which came off harboured us among the rocks the 21st. at noone and how long wee may lye here God knows. The 25th att night Mr. Fenwick went up to Bergen, and last night (the 29th) hee advised mee of a ship going to Newcastle, by which this comes. I shall make all the haste I can home with security, for all these parts are in warrs, and believe I should meete but with course quarter if I fell into any of their hands."

At the same time, as appears from the Court Book of the East India Company, he wrote to the Court advising them of the deaths of Gulston Addison and Mr Ralph Sheldon, the President of their Council in Bengal, and informing them of the recrudescence of the quarrels between the Right and Left Hand Castes[1].

Ultimately he got to Bergen, from which place he wrote to his son on the 20th of June:

"I hope some of my letters are arrived before this with you, for God knows when wee shall gett from this place. The posts to Copenhagen are very uncertaine and tedious: not heareing yett from the Directors though wee wrote them by ship and post on our arrivall.

Wee are alarmed with variety of news, but none good for us.......Yesterday wee had news by a Russ that the Confederate army was intirely routed (which God forbid) for from what I can heare and inferr from the sermon of Dr. Sacheverell, which is printed in high Dutch, and makes a great noyse in these parts, our nation is ripe for confusion and destruction, which God prevent, and I hope noe child or relation of mine will have a finger in it.

We hear of a Swedish armament directed against this place, and also of French and Swedish privateers on this coast, soe wish I may not pay deare for my hastning home and find that I have leaped out of the frying pan into the fire[2]."

The predicament in which he now found himself was indeed an awkward one. One of his main motives for coming home in a Danish ship had been to avoid being captured by a French privateer. He now had to face the risk of being captured not only by French

[1] Hedges 3. 121. [2] Dropmore 1. 46, 47.

but also by Swedish privateers, to say nothing of the prospect of a siege of Bergen by the Swedes. Had any one of these mishaps occurred, he would in all probability have lost the greater part if not the whole of the "something considerable" that he was bringing home from India. It is not therefore strange that he bitterly resented his enforced detention at Bergen which he speaks of as "this melancholy place of Bergen." Even if he had been free from apprehensions of capture, it is unlikely that he would have derived much gratification from the contemplation of the beauties of the Norwegian coast scenery, so much admired by English tourists of the present day, who visit it at about the same season of the year as that in which he first made his acquaintance with it, "harboured among the rocks by the pilot" as he describes his fate, when safely anchored in a glorious fiord. Wild, rocky scenery had little attraction for Englishmen of those days. But irritating as it must have been to remain in Norway at this critical time, he seems to have had no desire to cross to England on any one of the ships that took his correspondence to London, and he stuck firmly to his intention to get to Copenhagen with his property and thence to Amsterdam. He had no doubt good reasons for doing so. The latest news which he had had from London was more than a year old; and apart from his desire to dispose in Holland of the property which he was bringing home with him, he may well have been doubtful of the reception that awaited him when he got to London. His son had warned him, in November 1708, that his enemies on the Court had not scrupled to say that the Company ought to seize upon his person and effects[1]; and the conspirators at Fort St George had also boasted "that they were sure they

[1] Dropmore I. 37.

had enough against him to take his life, but they believed that the forfeiting of his estate might save him." In his first letter to his son Robert from Norway, he says, "Be sure to let me know who was for seizing my person and effects and the names of all those who have been doing me good or eville offices with the Company." It was of importance to him to know, before he came home, whether any and, if so, what steps had been taken to enforce these threats. For the arrangement into which he had entered with Martin at Pondicherry might well have been used as a handle against him; and for anything that he knew to the contrary, legal proceedings might already have been commenced by the Government against him in consequence of it. It is clear also that he feared that awkward questions might be raised on the information sent home to the Company by Fraser and Seaton with respect to the great diamond; and he accordingly on his first arrival on the coast on the 30th of May, before reaching Bergen, sent the following order to Evans, Dolben and his son: "For some particular reasons with which I shall acquaint you when wee meete, I desire you, upon receipt of this to deliver to my kinsman George Pitt my large diamond cutt into a brillion by Mr. Cope, weighing about one hundred and thirty six carratts[1]." In a letter of the same date he explained to his son Robert that he wished "this to be done with all possible secresye, as soon as you receive this letter; and this to prevent any trouble that may be given by the Company upon those villaines' information from abroad; but of this I would not have you speake a word to Mr. Dolben nor Sir Stephen, till Cousin George Pitt have secured it. In case of his mortallity, it is to be delivered to you, who are to follow the directions I have wrote him: and if you have a modell of it by you, or can

[1] Dropmore I. 47.

get one made immediately, send it to mee" (at Copenhagen) "with my first letters: gett Mr. Cope to cutt two or three in crystyall."

In the same letter he writes:

"Send me full advices of all my affairs, and a letter of credit for £1000 to the care of our envoy at Copenhagen, and the same to Amsterdam, also a list of the Parliament men, and of the directors since the union of the Companies. If there be any vacancy for a Parliament man, set me chosen if you can do so honourably: but let my intimating it be a Secret. Have your eye on some good and reputable lodgings for me in the city, and provide me with two footmen and a valet, trusty and such as have been in good families, brisk and cleanly fellows, and give them my livery in plain and good cloth. Pray gett me a neate campagne perwigg not too bushy nor too long.......Be sure to send me the prices current of all diamonds; and I enjoyne you by all that is good to send mee the true state of my family and omit nothing good or bad; but keepe to the truth, distinguishing what you know of a certainty and report, and if you conceale anything from mee I shall resent it as the worst of usage[1]."

A passage in the letter which he had written on the same day to his trustees Evans, Dolben and Robert Pitt shows that the fears which George Pitt had entertained, that the action taken by his daughters in leaving Enfield and going to reside with their mother in London would not be welcome to their father, were well founded. "I observe," he writes, "the disorders in my family and the defference they paid to my orders about their allowances, for which I have discarded them for ever; therefore desire that upon the beginning of their quarter after the receipt of this, you pay each of them quarterly, the mother and two daughters, twelve pounds ten shillings, and noe more will I allow them whilst I live, and I have made the same provision for them in my will: and for fortunes I will not give them a penny unless my cousin Pitt has gone soe far as to ingage his honour in a match, then that must and shall be

[1] Dropmore I. 46, 47.

made good. Amongst the alterations you have made since I left you I hope there is noe law for wives and children to carve for themselves."

But the most important of the documents written by the Governor at Bergen is his narrative of the circumstances connected with his purchase of the Pitt diamond. This has already been given in full in Chapter XIV of the present work. It will be noted that it is dated the 29th of July, nearly two months after his first arrival in Norway. How much longer he remained at Bergen does not appear. The next authentic news we have of his proceedings is contained in a letter to Harley from John Drummond, a Scotch merchant and banker, settled in Amsterdam. This letter is dated the 12th of September, and the following passage occurs in it: "Governor Pitt from the East Indies is safe arrived here, and being recommended by Sir Steven Evans and several others to me I think I have made him yours and have drunk your health heartily with him. He will have a powerful purse in England and be a thorn in the side of some great men now at the head of the Bank and India Company, if they thwart you. Therefore if you can get him chosen in Cornwall pray do, for he will be more useful to you than ever Dolben was to your predecessor, and I hope you will make a better use of him. He will be here yet ten or fourteen days if not three weeks, and then for England[1]."

It is clear from this letter written shortly after the Governor's arrival in Amsterdam, that his project for hastening home from the Cape on a Danish ship, so far from expediting his arrival in London, had greatly delayed it. For he had taken at least ten months and a half in getting from Madras to Holland. But now that he had at last reached

[1] Welbeck MSS. 4. 594.

Amsterdam safely with his diamonds and other portable Eastern valuables, he can have had little reason to regret his delay. Armed as he was with letters of credit from Queen Anne's jeweller and other men of substance and standing in London, advices as to the current prices of diamonds, and the Dutch goods most likely to turn to good account in England, provided with introductions to the Dutch merchants most to be trusted, furnished with models in crystal of his great diamond, his mind freed from all anxieties in respect of prosecutions or attempts to seize his property by the East India Company, and assured as he probably by this time was that his great concern was safely in the keeping of George Pitt, he must have felt greatly relieved; and there can be little doubt that he thoroughly enjoyed his stay at Amsterdam and made the most of his opportunities there. Apart from its other attractions, Amsterdam was then the head centre in Europe not only of the diamond merchants and diamond cutters, but also of every branch of the Eastern trade. During his stay there we may be sure that he learned much and did good business. Drummond, who was in the close confidence of Harley and St John, with both of whom he was in constant correspondence, was generally recognised as one of the ablest of their English envoys on the Continent; and at this juncture he had evidently good reasons of his own for cordially helping the Governor in every way by introductions and otherwise. For a very serious political crisis had arisen in England. The Queen who had long been slowly coming round to the matured opinion of King Solomon that "it is better to live on the house top than with a scolding woman in a great house," had finally broken with the Duchess of Marlborough, and was now for the first time for many years enjoying the blessedness of domestic peace and quietness under

the benign influence of complaisant Mrs Masham and her cousin Robert Harley. By the machinations of the latter, Godolphin had been dismissed from his office of Treasurer on the 4th of August, whilst Pitt was still presumably at Bergen. The other leading Whig Ministers remained for a few weeks longer in office; and Harley who had practically become Prime Minister, having been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, had entered into secret overtures with them for the formation of a Coalition Ministry, assuring them that "there was a Whig game intended at bottom[1]." Drummond was no doubt fully informed of these proceedings; and he seems from the above letter to have taken Thomas Pitt into his confidence, laying stress no doubt on Harley's assurances that the new Coalition Ministry would be "Whig at bottom," and the fact that Somers, Cowper, Halifax, and most of the less important members of the Whig Ministry were still continuing in office. Sir Gilbert Heathcote, the Governor's mortal enemy, to whom he owed his recent humiliating dismissal from the East India Company's service, was now Governor not only of the Company, but also of the Bank of England. The prospect of assisting the Prime Minister by becoming a thorn in the side of this man, who had done him so much mischief, must have been a great temptation to Pitt, to which he might well have succumbed, if it had been found practicable to constitute the proposed Coalition Ministry. It is not therefore likely that Drummond was very far wrong in telling Harley that he thought he had won the Governor over, nor did the yielding of the Governor to his solicitations necessarily imply any disloyalty to the Whig party.

The overtures, however, soon fell through. Somers and Cowper were obdurate, and resigned their offices.

[1] Stanhope 439.

Young Robert Walpole, Secretary of State for War, whose rising talents had not escaped the notice of Harley, who told him on this occasion, "You are worth half your party," followed suit[1]; and after some hesitation Halifax did the same. Harley, compelled to give up all thoughts of a Coalition, fell back wholly on the Tories. A general election was unavoidable. Parliament was dissolved on the 21st of September. Five days afterwards the writs were issued and the new Parliament summoned for the 25th of November.

These rapid changes in the political situation must have finally disposed of any expectations that Drummond may have entertained of enlisting the Governor as a supporter of the Harley administration and removed any necessity for Pitt to look about for any seat other than Old Sarum. A few weeks afterwards he was returned once more unopposed as member for that borough, and his son Robert, no doubt by his father's influence, became at the same time member for Salisbury. The Governor did not apparently get back to England until October; for in a letter to his daughters from George Pitt, dated from Strathfieldsay on the 5th of that month, the following passage occurs[2]. "On the receipt of a letter from your father, at his landing in Norway, full of resentment towards you, I did, by the first opportunity, doe you the best service I could to him by letter....I have since had another from him, which gives me hope it may be in the power of friends to pacifie your father, whose present displeasure seems to be founded on your disobeying his orders, which you cannot but remember I sufficiently cautioned you against. I have now nothing but to repeat... that you will both continue with your brother till you receive other commands from your father. And

[1] Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, I. 32

[2] Dropmore I. 49.

...pray keep a good correspondence with your brother, for the harmony your father will find amongst you will contribute more to the healing of the unhappy differences that have bin in your family, than all the endeavours of your friends together."

It is probable that this admirable advice was followed and that their father on reaching London found brother and sisters living for a while together in unity. For as will be seen his reconciliation with his daughters was soon effected, and he remained on good terms with them and their children for the remainder of his life.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### STARTING LIFE AGAIN AT HOME

THE general election of 1710, disastrous as it was for the time being to the Whig party, was not inopportune for the personal interests of Thomas Pitt. It secured for him promptly and almost automatically a safe seat in Parliament and brought him at once into close touch with the leading Whig politicians of the day. In view of the serious issues pending between them and their opponents, the continuance of the war with France and the maintenance of the Protestant succession, the prospect of any question being raised in Parliament with reference either to the irregular compact which he had made with the French Company in India, or to the legality of his acquisition of his famous diamond had become remote. Heathcote, his arch enemy, was like himself a strong Whig, and must have fully realised that no advantage was likely to accrue either to his party or to himself from any attempt to wash the dirty linen of his Company on the floor of the House of Commons. Apart from this consideration the Directors had already begun to regret the action they had taken in deposing their late Governor at the instance of such obscure and untrustworthy advisers as Gough and Braddyll; and they may well have desired to get on better terms with him. It was one thing to send out to India depreciatory despatches to which no reply could possibly arrive for a year or more; and another to confront their late Governor in person,

back in London in the House of Commons, freed from their control, with his riches safely hived. They knew by experience that he was not a man to be trifled with; and that he had powerful friends and a very unpleasant habit of getting his own way with his enemies. Moreover the condition of their affairs in India, brought about by the unexpected deaths of Gulston Addison, Brabourne and Sheldon, and the impotence of Fraser, had made his advice and assistance a matter of importance to them. They had already decided to depose Fraser, and had appointed as his successor President Harrison, an old friend and protégé of Pitt, now as it happened in London. Harrison had entered their service in 1700, and had gone out to Fort St George with strong recommendations from Samuel Pepys and William Hewer. The relations of the three men to Pitt and the obligations of Harrison to him may be gathered from the following extracts from their correspondence.

*Letter from Governor Pitt to William Hewer Esquire London*[1].

"Fort St George,
October 22, 1701.

I Received the Honour of yours of the 22nd of December last in behalfe of Mr Harrison, who I immediately on his arrivall sent 4th of Councill to Metchlepatam, and shall take all opportunities to encourage and preferr him or any one else that your Selfe or Mr Pepys Shall recommend, for whome I have a very great honour and esteem, desireing you'll be pleas'd to give my most humble service to him and accept the same your Selfe from me."

*Letter from Samuel Pepys Esq^r^ to Governor Pitt*[2].

"Clapham, Wednesday,
March 3rd, 1703.

S^r^

I could not lett the present opportunity slipp of returning you my most thankfull Acknowledgements of the most convincing Instances of your Respects, shewen mee, in your letter to my friend Mr Hewer; by whiche I understand the

[1] Hedges 3. 69. [2] Hedges 3. 81

earlely markes of your Favour express'd to Mr Harrison, and therein to my small part of the Recommendations hee attended you with from England, which as I shall allways inculcate to him the weight of his Obligations to your Selfe for, and the reasonablenesse of his endeavouring by all methods of Obedience and service to the Company and you, to merit the same, Soe should I bee most glad if any Comands from you, by which I might have opportunity of expressing my Esteeme of your Favours soe bestow'd and continued in him there, by the effects of my ready Services on all occasions to you here: whose Prosperity and Health I am heartily a well wisher to, and rest

Your most obliged and most faythfull
humble Servant,
S. Pepys."

*Letter from Governor Pitt to William Hewer Esq, London*[1].

"Fort St George,
Sept. ye 8th. 1705.

S^r,

I Received the honour of your 15th of Jan^ry last by the ffleett ffrigott, who arrived here the 27th of June, and am sorry for the death of that Honble and worthy Gentleman, Mr Pepys, and for Mr Harrison, he shall never want my Friendship, who is now at Fort St Davids in a post to his own Satisfaction and as he desired."

Governor Pitt's first interview with the Directors after his return seems to have taken place on his own initiative about three weeks after the general election. The following is the minute in the Court Book of the Company relating to it, dated the 20th of December 1710.

"The Court being informed that the late President of Fort St George, Mr Pitt, had Some things to acquaint the Company withall for their Service, if any Gentlemen were appointed to meet him, ordered

That the Chairman, Mr Nethaniel Herne, Mr Coulson, Mr Lyell, Mr Shepheard, Mr Alderman Ward, Mr Dawsonne and Mr Page, or any Three of them, be desired to discourse Mr Pitt thereupon, and to make Report, And that Mr President Harrison be present thereat[2]."

[1] Hedges 3. 100.

[2] Hedges 3. 120, 121.

Some months later, on the 7th of May 1711, Pitt had another interview with the Directors, the result of which is thus entered in the Court Book:

"Letter from the President and Councill of Fort St George, Dated the 22nd June 1700, received by the Abingdon, being read together with the Translate of a Letter received therewith from the said President and Councill, which Letter was sent to them by the Duan Saudatulla Cawn, relating to a great Diamond which he demands should be sent to the Mogull; and Thomas Pitt Esqr., late Governor of Fort St George comeing into Court and being acquainted with the said letter of Duan Saudatulla Cawn and the Clause in the Generall Letter, and having discoursed with the Court thereupon, and of other matters relating to their Affairs at Fort St George, Ordered That it be referred to the Committee of Correspondence, to draw up a Letter to be sent to Fort St George, on the Debate of the Court, in answer to the aforesaid Generall Letter, and the Letter from the Duan[1]."

The clause in the General Letter of the Council of Fort St George to which reference is made in this minute, was as follows[2]:

"Fort St George. Consultation, primo June 1710. Present, Wm Fraser Esqre, Governour and President, etc.

The President produces a Letter from the Duan received by a Brammeny attended with six horse, intimating something of a great Dyamond, but soe intricate and obscure wee cant perfectly tell his meaning. Translate of which is entered after this Consultation."

*Translate.*

"From Duan Sadatula Cawn, received 30th May, 1710.

All Health. I formerly wrote you about the Hosbullhookum I received from Court seal'd with the Kings Jewellers Jevoyhee Cawnes Seal, that Rama Chundra Voggee had given a bond to the Court about the Diamond that was brought, so I hope you will observe it, and I received a Strict order from said Jeweller to send up that Diamond to the King with all speed, therefore I have sent Mooro Pundit to you, and as soone as you receive this send up said Diamond with all care under your seal, being there is still a friendship between Us, soe don't delay sending said Diamond, for this is Extraordinary business relating to the King. What can I write more?"

[1] Hedges 3. 122. [2] Hedges 3. 121.

This malicious attempt on the part of Fraser and Seaton to injure his reputation and involve him in difficulty with the Directors, gave the Governor what must have been a very welcome opportunity of disposing once and for all of the libellous rumours, which had been so persistently disseminated by his enemies at home with respect to his great concern. As has been seen[1], he had been careful to retain in his custody the letters written by two of his colleagues on the Council of Fort St George, Raworth and Coppin, which he had placed before the Council at their meeting of the 11th of August, 1709, and which had proved conclusively to the satisfaction of every member of the Council that Seaton had been treacherously corresponding with the native authorities with the object of stirring up difficulties on their part in the matter of the diamond. He had now the opportunity, of which there can be little doubt that he availed himself, of producing these letters, exposing to the members of the Court as much as he thought desirable of the machinations of Fraser and Seaton, and explaining not only his own position with respect to the diamond, but also the mischiefs that might be done to the Company, if their subordinate servants were allowed to correspond in this way with the native authorities. The result of this interview appears in the following extract from the General Letter sent out by the Court to India, which might almost have been drafted by Pitt himself.

"Your 15th Paragraph," the Court say, "of the Abingdon Letter mentions the Letter from the Duan Sadatulla Cawn and that it is very ambiguous and intricate, relating to a great Diamond belonging to the King which you know not what to make of, perhaps some of the Persons who signed that letter do not, but wee apprehended those who have Supported Captain Seaton are let further into the Secrett. What is incumbent on you is to prevent every handle the Moors may take to embarrass us,

[1] See page 368.

of which such a Report as this might be made a very great one; how far and wide the mischievous consequences of it may Spread the wisest of you cant foresee, and by the late management show you want Tallents to Stop....Wherefore it is all your Dutys to prevent it, and whatever has a tendency that way. It dos not appear what answer was returned to that Letter by anything in your Packett. This wee mention as to your Carriage towards the Moors. But with relation to our Selves wee say wee expect you to send us the best account you can on your Enquirys how that Diamond was come by, whether the buying it or the bringing of it to England has been to our prejudice and wherein and how much and any thing else you may think proper for our notice, that if wee should Suffer thereby wee may endeavour a Remedy. Enquire also who they were that first Sett on foot the discourse about it, and how it came to pass that when the Dyamond had been in England severall years before, the Natives, if that Letter was genuine, never mentioned anything about it till after the late President was come to England[1]."

When these orders reached India, Harrison had superseded Fraser. This seems to have been the last occasion on which the Governor was troubled with any attempt to dispute the ownership of his diamond. That the latter was already the talk of the town, and was somewhere on view in London on the Queen's birthday that year, appears from the following extract from a letter written on the 15th of December 1710, by Lady Wentworth to her son, Lord Raby, at Berlin: "My dearest and best of children, for all the great scarsity of mony, yett hear will be a gloryous show one the Queen's birthday, wonderful rich cloaths ar preparing for it: thear was one that see Mr Pit's great dyomont that I writ you word of, and they say its as big as a great egg; I would have the sity of London bye it and mak a present of it to put in the Queen's Crown[2]."

In the meanwhile its owner had found himself in a somewhat similar position to that which his son Robert had occupied, when the late Whig Ministry had come into office. For the Whigs were now out,

[1] Hedges 3. 122. [2] *The Wentworth Papers*, 164.

and all things had begun "to run counter to his opinion and party." But he took his Parliamentary responsibilities in a very different spirit from that which his son had displayed. He was by no means the sort of man to content himself by remitting his attendances at the House of Commons, because of his disgust at the proceedings of his opponents. Passive resistance had no attractions for him at any stage of his career. Rightly or wrongly, he had a very strong belief that the State would be seriously endangered, if the High Church party were allowed to have a free hand in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. As we have seen he had been greatly shocked in Norway by a perusal of Sacheverell's sermon, and by the reports which had reached him of the popular sympathy which it had evoked. "From what I can heare and inferr from it," he had written to his son, "our nation is ripe for confusion and destruction, which God prevent, and I hope noe child or relation of mine will have a finger in it." It is not likely that he was led to modify this opinion by the overwhelming defeat of the Whigs in the late general election, or by the proceedings of the Tory Ministry, which had now come into power. The bugbear, which he had ever before his eyes and with good reason was the triumph of the Jacobite cause and the restoration of the Stuart dynasty; and month by month during the remainder of Queen Anne's reign he must have been confirmed in his fears that the leading men in the Ministry were working steadily and stealthily with this main end in view. It is easy to understand the constantly increasing indignation with which he regarded, in common with the great majority of his party, their manœuvres to commit the country to a line of policy, the natural ending of which seemed to be to bring the Pretender to the throne by the aid of the French

King. Till recently, the pulpit had been for generations to the great majority of the electors what the political press has now become. The clergy, Churchmen and nonconformists alike, had enjoyed once at least in every week what was practically the monopoly of instructing the masses in politics. Most general elections, including the last, had turned on some supposed religious crisis. Of late years a rival to the pulpit had sprung into existence. Of the many changes that had taken place in England during his twelve years' absence, none was more startling or destined to produce more momentous consequences than the growing influence of the new journalism. It had suddenly become a potent factor in party politics and the formation of public opinion, and the present Ministry were determined to utilise it to the utmost. Having come into power by the aid of the pulpit on the cry that the Church was in danger, they went on to attain their real ends by the advocacy of the press, then almost in its infancy and at the mercy of every party which was for the time being in power. Defoe's *Review*, a twopenny weekly journal dealing not only with politics and news, but also with discussions on general matters, had been started in 1704 and was still running. Its success had led to the publication of numerous other papers, of which the most important, so far as politics were concerned, was the *Examiner*, the contributors to which included St John, Atterbury, Prior, and other prominent Tory writers. Of less importance to politicians, though of infinitely greater interest to the lovers of literature, was Steele's *Tatler*, which had made its first appearance in April 1709, and which a few months after the Governor's return to London was superseded by the *Spectator*. The delightful contents of these two peerless periodicals, written by sound Whigs, must have been a source of considerable

gratification to him. For it appears from his correspondence that he had greatly appreciated the opportunity of reading in his exile at Fort St George some of the best works of the day sent out to his colleagues on the Council by their friends, and had bitterly resented the neglect of his son Robert to furnish him with a proper supply of similar literature. But whatever pleasure he may have derived from Steele's and Addison's essays, must have been greatly discounted by the startling articles which now began to appear in the *Examiner*; and the substance of which was reproduced towards the end of the next year in Swift's celebrated pamphlet on *The conduct of the Allies and of the Late Ministry, in Beginning and Carrying on the War*. Swift had come from Ireland to London a month before Pitt's return, bitterly resenting the neglect of his former patrons the Whigs to reward him before they went out of office for the somewhat half-hearted services which he had from time to time rendered them. He had been received with open arms by Harley and had at once undertaken the management of the *Examiner*. From that time onward to the end of the Queen's reign, he was the literary champion of the Tories, constantly consulted by them, and admitted to their closest intimacy. "I stand," he writes in his *Journal to Stella* as early as the 14th of October 1710, "with the new people ten times better than ever I did with the old, and forty times more caressed." They might well caress him. Harley had himself told him that "their great difficulty lay in the want of some good pen to keep up the spirit raised in the people, to assert the principles, and justify the proceedings of the new ministers[1]." In plain words, the old Parliamentary hand fully realised that his party were in great difficulties, and that they stood in

[1] Swift's *Memoirs relating to the change in the Queen's Ministry*.

urgent need of an exceptionally able advocate. The burning question of the hour was the war with France. This war had been begun with a light heart, with the object of curbing the vast power and ambition of the French King, by a Coalition Ministry, the majority of whom were Tories. It had been successful beyond the wildest hopes of those who had taken it in hand. Thanks to the military genius of Marlborough, who had never lost a battle or failed to take a town that he had sat down before, the French armies had been driven back into France; and the enormous resources of the French King were rapidly approaching exhaustion. The Coalition Government who had begun it, had been superseded by a Whig Ministry, who had pursued the policy of their predecessors. Little more seemed required than that the Tories, now that they had come into office, should continue to prosecute the war with vigour, and carry it to a speedy and successful conclusion. Negotiations for a peace had been entered into by the late Whig Ministry at Gertruydenberg, and had been broken off in the preceding July. That peace must soon come seemed inevitable; for the French King had already agreed to make many concessions and might reasonably be expected to make more, when the allied army had once entered France. But the Tory leaders had strong reasons of their own for not wishing to drive him to extremities. He was the only European potentate who at that time supported the claims of the Pretender; and the Stuart cause would be practically a hopeless one if his aid were withdrawn as it well might be, if at this critical moment, now that the Tories most of whom were Jacobites were in power, no concessions were made to him in return for his past services. The Queen was in bad health, and might die at any moment. In the event of her death and the succession of the House of Hanover,

the Tories might be out of office for an indefinite period. As a matter of fact Harley was already intriguing through the medium of the Earl of Jersey and the Abbé Gaultier, for the restoration of the Stuarts and a settlement with the French King, whose emissary had been assured that the Queen "had a very tender feeling for the Pretender whom she looked upon as though he were her own child"; that the recent changes in the Ministry had been made partly for the love of him; that Harley, the Dukes of Shrewsbury and Buckingham were working for him only; and that there would be no difficulty in bringing him to the throne after the Queen's death, if he would only renounce the Catholic religion[1].

It is possible that Swift, whatever his suspicions may have been, had not yet been let into the secret of these intrigues. All that it was necessary for Harley to let him know at this stage, was that the business which he had to undertake was to persuade the public that the war had been a miserable mistake from the beginning; that whatever benefits the Allies had obtained from it, the English nation, which had been called upon to spend enormous sums upon it, had got nothing in return but empty military glory; that it had been purposely prolonged by Marlborough and the moneyed classes for their own personal interests; and that unless the Tories were heartily supported in bringing it to a speedy end in spite of the opposition of the Allies who were the only parties who had received any substantial advantages from it, the nation would inevitably be ruined. No man was better fitted for such a task than Swift, nor could any work have been more congenial to him. That he was thirsting for revenge upon Godolphin is clear from his *Journal to Stella*. On the 9th of September he writes, "The Whigs were ravished to

[1] Stanhope 470.

see me, and would lay hold on me as a twig, while they are drowning, and the great men making me their clumsy apologies etc. But my Lord Treasurer received me with a great deal of coldness, which has enraged me so that I am almost vowing revenge....... And I am come home rolling resentments in my mind and framing schemes of revenge, full of which (having written down some hints) I go to bed." On the 1st of October again he writes, "I have almost finished my lampoon, and will print it for revenge on a certain great person." On the 14th of October, "My lampoon is cried up to the skies. Did I not tell you of a great man, who received me very coldly; that is he; it was only a little revenge." The lampoon in question was of course his verses on "Sid Hamet and his Rod." Their success, great as it was, by no means satiated Swift's desire for revenge. He had still, as he had intimated in the last line of his lampoon, a further rod in pickle for his unfortunate victim, and it was not long before he applied it mercilessly. "If," he asks, "we began this war contrary to reason; if, as the other party themselves upon all occasions acknowledge, the success we have had was more than we could reasonably expect; if we have made weak and foolish bargains with our allies, suffered them tamely to break every article in those bargains to our disadvantage, and allowed them to treat us with insolence and contempt at the very instant when we were gaining towns, provinces and kingdoms for them at the price of our own ruin and without any prospect of interest to ourselves: if all this, I say, be our case, it is a very obvious question to ask, by what motives and by what management are we thus become the dupes and bubbles of Europe?" And he answers the question thus, "When the Counsels of this war were debated in the late King's time, a certain great man" (Godolphin) "was then so averse from entering

into it, that he rather chose to give up his employment and tell the King he could serve him no longer. Upon that prince's death, although the grounds of our quarrel with France had received no manner of addition, yet this lord thought fit to alter his sentiments, for the scene was quite changed: his lordship and the family" (Marlborough's) "with whom he was engaged with so complicated an alliance, were in the highest credit possible with the Queen. The treasurer's staff was ready for his lordship; the duke was to command the army; and the duchess by her employments and the favour she was possessed of, to be always nearest her majesty's person; by which the whole power at home and abroad would be devolved upon that family. This was a prospect so inviting, that to confess the truth, it could not easily be withstood by any who have so keen an appetite for wealth or power.......So that whether this war was prudently begun or not, it is plain that the true spring and motive of it was the aggrandising of a particular family; and in short a war of the general and the ministry, and not of the prince or people: since those very persons were against it when they knew the power and consequently the profit would be in other hands." These personal attacks on Godolphin and Marlborough were supplemented by an equally successful attempt to set class against class, the landed interest against the moneyed, and to point out the injury that would be done to both by the assistance that had been given to the Allies. "With those measures," Swift says, "fell in all that set of people, who are called the moneyed men: such as had raised vast sums by trading with stocks and funds, and lending upon great interest and premiums: whose perpetual harvest is war, and whose beneficial way of traffic must very much decline by a peace.......We have conquered a noble

territory for the States that will maintain sufficient troops to defend itself, and feed many hundred thousand inhabitants ; where all encouragement will be given to introduce and improve manufactures, which was the only advantage they wanted : and which added to their skill, industry and parsimony will enable them to undersell us in every market of the world." In the meanwhile what has the nation gained ? "If the peace be made this winter," he says, "we are then to consider what circumstances we shall be in towards paying a debt of about fifty millions, which is a fourth part of the purchase of the whole island if it were to be sold ?......It will no doubt be a great comfort to our grandchildren, when they see a few rags hung up in Westminster Hall, which cost a hundred millions, whereof they are paying the arrears, to boast as beggars do that their grandfathers were rich and great."

In estimating the unprecedented effect on the popular opinion of the day produced by inflammatory writing of this description, widely disseminated and discussed, accentuated and amplified for months with scurrilous libels and innuendoes against the late Ministry and Marlborough, who was charged with protracting the war for his own private purposes, we must bear in mind the extent to which Swift's opponents in the press were handicapped in replying to it. No reports of the discussions in Parliament were available to the public to enable them to know what was said on the other side ; and any writers for the opposition who dared to use equally free language subjected themselves to the risk of grievous personal pains and penalties. Queen Anne's reign has often been described as the Augustan age of English literature, amongst other reasons because of the rewards and recognition received by a few eminent writers from the Ministry of the day, notably

by Addison and Steele when the Whigs were in power, and by Swift and Prior when the Tories came in. Lecky in his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* has indeed gone so far as to maintain that the "generous and discriminating patronage of literature was the special glory of the Tory Ministry of Anne[1]." But it would be a mistake to regard this patronage, for which none of the recipients in the long run had much reason to be thankful, as the outcome of a disinterested love of literature on the part of the Ministers for the time being in power. It was given in return for valuable political services rendered by the writers in the shape of libellous lampoons, partisan pamphlets, and steady polemical support in the party press. To the luckless pressmen and pamphleteers who dared to write for the opposition, the age was a veritable Reign of Terror. When Defoe in his *Short Way with Dissenters* excited the wrath of the High Churchmen by drawing a very clever caricature of the sentiments they were habitually expressing, so true to life that some of them thanked him warmly for it, before they discovered its irony, he had not only to stand in the pillory for his pains but was left to rot in Newgate until released by the intervention of Harley, to become a recruit on the secret service staff of his enemies, a ruined man, whom, to quote his own words, "gaol, pillories and such like had convinced that he wanted passive courage," so much so that he "should never for the future think himself injured if he were called a coward[2]." Similar punishment was now meted out with an unsparing hand by St John to the unfortunate writers who ventured to reply to Swift. In October 1711 he reports to the Queen[3], "I have discovered the author of another scandalous libel, who will be in custody this afternoon. He will make the thirteenth

[1] Lecky I. 158. [2] Welbeck MSS. 4. 62. [3] Stanhope 495.

I have seized and the fifteenth I have found out." Zealous as he was in the persecution of these poor scribes, he did not satisfy Swift, than whom no man was more sensitive to criticism, and who a year afterwards in his *Journal to Stella* writes, "Those devils of Grub Street rogues will not be quiet. They are always mauling lord treasurer, lord Bolingbroke and me. We have the dog under prosecution, but Bolingbroke is not active enough." Finding that they could not be silenced in any other way, the Tory Government at last dealt them a deadly blow by the imposition of a prohibitory stamp duty. "Grub Street," Swift writes gleefully to Stella on the 19th of July 1712, "has but ten days to live, then an Act of Parliament takes place that ruins it by taxing every half sheet at a halfpenny." Within the month he writes again, "Do you know that Grub Street is dead and gone last week? The *Observator* is fallen; the *Medleys* are jumbled with the *Flying Post*; the *Examiner* is deadly sick; the *Spectator* keeps up and doubles its price. I know not how long it will last." It lingered on with a reduced circulation to the 6th of December in that year.

During the earlier part of the time when this unequal paper war was being waged in England, Marlborough was engaged upon his last campaign. Marshal Villars had constructed his famous line of defences, pronounced impregnable, which he himself had called "Marlborough's Ne Plus Ultra," and which are thought by some to have suggested to Wellington the lines of Torres Vedras. He held them with an army of 70,000 infantry and 20,000 cavalry against Marlborough and his 75,000 men. But by a rapid march of 36 miles in sixteen hours over very difficult country, Marlborough turned them and took up a position in the enemy's rear. He then invested Bouchain, which capitulated on the

12th of September, and going into winter quarters, prepared to carry into effect in the following spring his long cherished project of a march into the heart of France. Even Bolingbroke could not withhold his admiration. "My Lord Stair," he wrote to him, "opened to us the general steps which your Grace intended to take, in order to pass the lines in one part or another. It was, however, hard to imagine and too much to hope, that a plan which consisted of so many parts, wherein so many different corps were to co-operate personally together, should entirely succeed and no one article fail of what your Grace had projected. I most heartily congratulate your Grace on this great event of which I think no more needs be said, than that you have obtained, without losing a man, such an advantage as we should have been glad to have purchased with the loss of several thousand lives." And he admitted this to others. "I look upon the progress," he said, "which the Duke of Marlborough has lately made to be really honourable to him, and mortifying to the enemy. The event cannot be ascribed to superior numbers, or to any accident; it is owing to genius and conduct." And yet before the year was out Marlborough had been deprived of all his employments. Even Swift, the greatest hater in that age of militarism, who had done more than any other man to bring about the great general's unpopularity, was aghast. "If the Ministry be sure of a peace," he writes to Stella[1], "I shall wonder at this step, and do not approve of it at the best. The Queen and lord treasurer hate the Duke, and to that he owes his fall, more than to his other faults.......We have had constant success in arms while he commanded. Opinion is a mighty matter in war, and I doubt the French think it impossible to conquer an army that he leads; and

[1] *Journal to Stella*, 1 Jan. 1712.

our soldiers think the same; and how far this step may encourage the French to play tricks with us, no man knows. I do not love to see personal resentment mix with public affairs." We are not left to conjecture the views of Governor Pitt on this lamentable catastrophe. His opinions of the Ministry, who were responsible for it, were expressed, as will be seen in no measured terms in one of the few speeches of his in the House of Commons of which any record has survived.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### FAMILY AND POLITICAL DISCORDS

IT was fortunate for Thomas Pitt that he had come back to England when he did, not merely because by doing so he had secured for himself a ready re-entry into the House of Commons, but also for personal and family reasons. Amongst other advantages, his return enabled him to relieve his son Robert and Sir Stephen Evans of the management of his monetary affairs. As has been seen, rumours and warnings of the financial instability of Evans had from time to time reached India; and that they were not without foundation became very soon apparent by his bankruptcy, which involved many of those who had trusted him, including the merchant Stratford, Swift's old classmate, and the poet Prior in more or less serious losses[1]. The Governor might well have shared their fate, if he had been in India when the catastrophe occurred, for Robert would have been but a poor protector of his interests. With his usual carelessness he seems to have neglected to inform his father that Evans had declined to part with the great diamond without Robert's signature to a paper engaging to pay 5 per cent. of whatever the proceeds of its sale might eventually be; an engagement to which the Governor, as might have been expected, took strong exception some seven years afterwards, when Evans' assignees

[1] *Journal to Stella*, 12 and 13 Jan. and 6 March 1712.

presented their demand for payment, and proceeded to enforce it by proceedings in Chancery[1].

His presence in England at this time was also very desirable in the interests of his daughters. Three years before, his friend Raworth had written to him, "You would do well to think of marrying your eldest daughter, for being fit for it, the sooner the better: and if you assign her fortune, something may be done and she well placed. I find that if daughters are not disposed of while their parents live, they are liable to many misfortunes afterwards. Men of estates are scarce, and women plenty, so that they do not easily go off, without a good deal of money, though they be never so virtuous and pretty[2]." That Pitt himself was of the same way of thinking is clear from a letter he had written to Colonel Wyndham in January 1709, in which he says, "My daughters are my greatest concern, and heartily wish they were well disposed of, which I have left entirely to my Cozen George Pitt[3]." His anxiety with respect to them was now soon removed. The first to marry was Lucy, the younger and apparently the more amiable of the two. Her husband General James Stanhope must have been a man after the Governor's own heart. He had greatly distinguished himself in the war in Spain, where he had been second in command under the Earl of Peterborough at the taking of Barcelona in 1705; and when Peterborough left Spain, had succeeded him. In 1710 he had won two brilliant victories at Almenara and Zaragoza. On the former of these occasions, in an encounter with the Spanish cavalry, he had slain their commander in single combat, an exploit commemorated by its being depicted upon the medal which, by the Queen's orders, was struck in honour of the day.

[1] Dropmore I. 63, 65. [2] Dropmore I. 28.
[3] Hedges 3. 114.

The importance of the second victory had been cordially recognised by Marlborough, who had written to Godolphin, "Before this you have heard by Colonel Harrison the particulars of the battle in Spain, which is so deciding that it must have given us peace, had not the French been heartened by our divisions in England." He and Peterborough were the most popular military heroes of their day in England. He had the additional advantage in the eyes of his father-in-law of being a sound Whig, and already so promising a politician that he and Walpole shared the leadership of the opposition in the House of Commons during the last years of Queen Anne's reign. He married Lucy Pitt in 1712, the year in which he came back from Spain; and he and his wife seem to have been ever afterwards on the best of terms with the Governor. We shall probably not be far wrong in thinking that Lucy was her father's favourite child. She left behind her a character for gentleness, to which no other of his children could lay claim[1].

Her elder sister Essex married in 1714 Charles Cholmondeley of Vale Royal in Cheshire, grandfather of the first Lord Delamere. Judging from such of her letters as have survived, we may doubt whether in her case her father's injunction to her mother to give his daughters a "good education, and not to stick at any charge for it" was very effectually carried out: for her spelling and grammar are, if possible, worse than those of most ladies of that generation. In May 1711, while she was staying with her father in his house at Pall Mall, she writes to her sister-in-law, Mrs Robert Pitt[2], "I writ this in bed, for I have such a pain in my head and coff that I cannot keep my head from the pellow. I believe I shall never be well again, for my coff grows worst and worst

[1] Rosebery 13, 14. [2] Dropmore I. 50.

every day. I have had no coacth to go anywhere. Master Tommy" (Robert Pitt's eldest son) "is very well. I think the town agrees with him, for he have a fine coller and groose fat." Cholmondeley does not seem to have been the first man whose affections she had hoped to engage, for she writes from Blandford St Mary, in 1703, "We go to Mr Bartman semmer's very ofone and are very much in his favor. I was in hopes of gitting of him at one time, but the other day I was strock dead all at once for he told me he never desind to marry[1]."

The Governor seems to have taken kindly to Robert's wife. Her mother, Lady Grandison, writing to her in April 1711, says, "I am pleased to hear my dear daughter was so well received by Governor Pitt. It gives mee hopes I shall have the satisfaction to find you in his house, when wee meet. This I must imput to your good management, for I am senseble of the difficultys you have to strugel with, while there are partys in your family, and I cannot but think it is a fault in your father to allow of it, as I shall tell him, you may assure yourself. The General" (Stewart) "is much pleased to know you are in the Governor's house[1]."

It may be doubted whether this good lady's interference was calculated to promote her daughter's interests. Such family discord as still continued, when she proposed to intervene, was mainly confined to Robert and his sisters; and if the Governor was to be drawn into taking Robert's side, now that his daughters were under his own roof and guardianship, he was far more likely to be induced to do so by the unaided attractions of his daughter-in-law and his affection for her children than by the dictation of Lady Grandison and her husband. It is clear from a letter of his written to Dolben some four years

[1] Dropmore I. 50.

before this that he had resented General Stewart's officious intermeddling and advice to Robert in the matter of the great diamond. "With concern," he says in it, "I read what you wrote of the Lieut. General. My sone had noe Commission to impart my affairs to him, and for God sake prevent any misfortune that may attend me from anything that may befall Sr Ste: of which I gave you a hint in my last.......I am of your opinion of these two gentlemen's characters.......I wish it was bought for that small sum the Generall mentions and for that use[1]." It would appear from this and other passages in his correspondence that he had little liking for the General or his wife; and that he strongly suspected them of being the prompters of some of Robert's most foolish letters. For example, he writes on one occasion to his daughter-in-law, "I received yours of the 15th and severall others from you and your husband. The latter were so stuffed with complaints and directions to mee, that made mee very uneasye, and have taken a resolution to answer none of his letters. None of my children shall ever prescribe to me who I shall take into my house, or who I shall keep out, more especially him that has been the bane of my family, of which he has given me proofs not only whilst I was abroad, but since. Soe lett him rely on those that have hitherto steered his judgment, for I will have notheing more to doe with him[2]." And again "I thank you for your congratulations of my daughter" (Mrs Cholmondeley who had just had a child) "being safe, and wish there was a better harmony in my family than at present, and so far as I can see, like to bee; and that some of late had not given mee just cause to revive my resentments. I know not by whose advice you have acted, nor your husband, who never followed mine."

[1] Hedges 3. 130. [2] Dropmore 1. 58, 59.

The Governor's habitual plain language with regard to his eldest son throughout his correspondence has been cited by some as an indication of brutality. But it must be admitted that he had great provocation. Robert seems not only to have shown a perverse ingenuity in disregarding his father's directions and wishes, but to have been in very truth "the bane of the family," perpetually at variance either with his mother or his sisters or his brother, ever trying to poison his father's mind against them, and always piteously entreating for more money. A contemptibly poor creature, with few if any redeeming qualities, his self-satisfaction was unbounded. What Horace Walpole says of his eldest son and heir, Thomas Pitt, seems to have been equally applicable to him, "Never was ill nature so dull as his: never dullness so vain[1]." There can be little doubt that his father on returning to England fulfilled the promise he had made before he left India, of placing him in easier circumstances. He certainly allowed him to live at Mawarden Court and at Blandford St Mary and to have the rents of the manor of Stratford. It would also appear from one of the letters of General Stewart that he had already settled some other property on him; "a little" the General calls it: but whatever it was his father-in-law would be likely to regard it as too small[2]. Writing to Robert in December 1716, his father says, "With what you have wasted of my estate that I consigned to you, what settled, and what I permit you to possess" (the rents of Old Sarum) "what bestowed on your brothers and sisters amounts to upwards of £90,000[3]." This in those days was a prodigious sum. And when this letter was written the great diamond, it must be borne in mind, was still on the Governor's hands

[1] Rosebery 18. [2] Dropmore I. 57.
[3] Dropmore I. 61.

with little prospect of a purchaser. There is no trustworthy evidence that the Governor was a niggardly man at any stage of his career. That he was disposed to assist the poorer members of his family has already been shown. In the year after he returned from India, he restored the two churches at Blandford St Mary and Old Sarum. He built another church at Abbot's Ann in Hampshire, where he was lord of the manor[1]. The reports of his love of money seem mainly to be based on the irritation which he occasionally displays in his letters at the extravagance of his sons, and the attempts made as he thought to overreach him by comparative strangers. For example when he had a bill sent in to him for £2549 for the expenses of Robert's election at Oakhampton, which he had been led to expect would not exceed £500; and when he failed to receive satisfactory accounts from the stewards of some of his estates[2]. That he was fully justified in trying to curb the expenditure of his sons goes without saying; and it would have been strange if the reputation of his wealth had not exposed him to imposition on the part of others. It seems to have been his habit to examine his bills before paying them, with the result that he sometimes came to the conclusion that he had been overcharged. On one occasion, writing to his son Robert who was staying at Blandford, he expresses his dissatisfaction with certain building accounts furnished by a Mr Jolly, and especially with one from a Mr Bascom. "That[3]," he says, "was one of the fellows that said to William Hird, when hee found fault with him for not following his worke, hee answered: Dam it, the Governor had money enough; and soe I believe Jolly thought too, by the unparallel'd expense hee has made. I am

[1] Hedges 3. 30, 155. [2] Dropmore I. 67—69.
[3] Dropmore I. 51.

resolved to peruse strictly Mr Jolly's accounts and have all the work measured and the charges investigated." The result does not appear to have been satisfactory; for he wrote some months afterwards, "I earnestly desire you will settle my accounts with Mr Jolly, who, I believe, has not only wronged me, but suffered every one else to do the same. Pray be cautious with him." It would be absurd to infer from this and similar passages in his letters that he was unduly fond of money, or inclined to be unreasonably suspicious of those with whom he had money dealings. We have seen that his suspicions of the solvency of Evans had been proved to be well founded. Like most men, who have had to work hard themselves to make their own fortunes, he resented being cheated by those who served him badly. To those who served him well, he was more considerate. "For my particular affairs," he wrote to his friend Sir Edmund Harrison from India, "I employ the cursedest villain that ever was in the world, and see him cheat me before my face, but then he is a most dextrous indefatigable fellow in busyness, which makes me such amends that I can afford to bear with it[1]."

The house which he had taken in Pall Mall shortly after his return from Madras, seems to have been his town residence for the remainder of his life. It is stated in his will to have been a leasehold house. We may not unreasonably surmise that he took good care to make himself very comfortable in it, after the fashion of those days, that he kept an exceptionally good cellar, good servants, and a handsome establishment; and that he hospitably entertained there a large circle of his old friends, and the new ones whom he now met at Westminster and elsewhere. His life at this stage of his career must have been a striking contrast to that which he had

[1] Hedges 3. 103.

led during his twelve years' exile at Fort St George. To this house his two sons-in-law came wooing his daughters. From it he had no great distance to walk across the Park to his Parliamentary duties, returning home when they were over, often, it is to be feared, in anything but an amiable frame of mind, until the death of good Queen Anne. For bitter as the indignation of every member of his party deservedly was during those years, it may be doubted whether any of them entertained darker suspicions or more vehement hatred of their opponents than he did. Party passions have seldom run higher than they did then; and his most deeply rooted prejudices were all on the side which was now in a hopeless minority in the House of Commons, though it had a small majority for a while in the House of Lords, until it was swamped in 1712 by the creation of a batch of twelve new peers, whom Wharton on one occasion asked whether they would vote singly or by their foreman. Whilst in India at a distance from the scene of action, he had very properly advised his son never to enter the House prepossessed. But it must have been on very rare occasions that he now found himself able to live up to this admirable counsel of perfection. For with his distrust of the Tories and their leaders no policy could have been more repugnant to him than that which they were now pursuing. In common with a large section of his fellow-countrymen, he seems to have taken much the same view of the war with Louis the Fourteenth that the majority of Englishmen did a century later of their war with Napoleon, regarding it as a just and necessary means of curbing the tyranny of an ambitious French sovereign. "Tyrant" was the favourite term of reproach, which in both cases was applied in England to the French ruler. Commenting on the victory of Ramillies, the great numbers of French

prisoners, colours and standards brought to England, and the rewards bestowed on the Duke of Marlborough, Raworth his old friend had written to him in 1707, "Great is the man and great have been his actions but all these favours create enemies[1]." But he adds, "If he reduce the grand tyrant, I shall regret nothing that is given to him." Apart, however, from the Governor's personal views on the expediency of the war, as a practical man and a patriot he must have realised that the removal of Marlborough from his command at a critical stage of the negotiations for peace, entered into by the Ministry in flagrant disregard of the interests of their Allies, and the appointment as his successor of the Duke of Ormond, with peremptory restraining orders "to avoid engaging in any siege or hasarding any battle until he had further orders from the Queen," were not only grossly unfair to our Allies, but absolutely fatal to any hope of the speedy conclusion of an honourable and satisfactory peace. Even if it be granted that all that had been written on behalf of the Tory Government of the day to inflame public opinion against those who were responsible for the continuation of the war was correct—that the war had been a mistake from the first, that it had been originally entered upon for the personal interests of Godolphin and Marlborough, that England had as yet gained nothing by it but empty military glory, that her interests had been sacrificed to those of her Allies, and that the sooner it was brought to an end the better—the only practical question at issue at this time was, how best to end it and obtain as favourable terms as possible from the French King. Obviously the worst possible way of doing this was that adopted by the Ministry, which was suddenly to check the further advances into France of an ever-victorious army, commanded by

[1] Dropmore I. 28.

an ever-victorious General: to supersede that General ignominiously and to give his untried successor absolute orders to cease hostilities, without knowing on what terms the enemy were prepared to grant peace. By the French themselves the action taken by the Ministry was set down as a typical instance of the proverbial madness of Englishmen. As early as January 1711, de Torcy, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the King of France, on being informed in confidence of the desire of the English Ministry for peace, "a thing," he admits, "most necessary" for his own fellow-countrymen, "but of which at that time they had not the smallest expectation," candidly admits in his *Memoirs* that "asking them whether they desired peace was like asking a sick man whether he wished to recover[1]." At the end of that year, the position of France had become infinitely worse by the passage of the allied armies past the "Ne Plus Ultra" lines without the loss of a single man; the military reputation of Marlborough was at its zenith: never had the outlook for France seemed more hopeless. Well might the French King say when he heard of Marlborough's recall, "His dismissal will do all that we desire." From that moment, as Swift had feared, the French began "to play tricks with us," demanding conditions which they had not previously dared to put forward, withdrawing offers which they had previously made and protracting the negotiations by one ingenious expedient and another, until they practically got unhoped-for concessions. Peace was not concluded at Utrecht until the end of March 1713, on terms which when they were made public were found to be on the whole no better, and in some respects worse than those which had been offered to the late Whig Ministry three years before at Gertruydenberg, and had been

[1] Stanhope 472.

rejected as insufficient. Disappointing as they were, a day of thanksgiving was appointed, and both Houses of Parliament went in solemn procession to St Paul's to return thanks to God for them, represented it need hardly be said almost exclusively by the Tory members. In another week (the 16th of July) Parliament was prorogued and a few days later dissolved. The general election that followed left the strength of the two parties very much the same as before. The country as a whole seems to have been glad that the twelve years' war was over at last, but to have felt some difficulty in determining which of the two Ministries deserved the greater blame, the Tories for failing to obtain better conditions from the French on the conclusion of their belated peace, or their predecessors for refusing the terms offered them three years before. One fact only was indisputable, that the consequence of the prolongation of the war had been that the nation had been saddled with a vastly increased national debt to say nothing of the injury done to trade and the lamentable loss of life that it had entailed.

At this general election Governor Pitt and his son Robert were both returned for Old Sarum. The new Parliament met on the 16th of February 1714; and the weary Parliamentary warfare of mutual recrimination was resumed. The Queen's speech, so far from being framed with the object of bringing the two parties together, seems to have been studiously designed to exasperate the opposition. The great majority of the Whig members of the House of Commons during the last few months had been denouncing the peace to their constituents and representing the Hanoverian succession as endangered by the machinations of the Tory Ministry. For doing this, they were now held up to reprobation by Her Majesty. "It has pleased God," she informed

them, "to bless my endeavours to obtain an honourable and advantageous Peace for my own people, and for the greatest part of my allies. Nothing that I can do shall be wanting to render it universal, and I persuade myself that with your hearty Concurrence my interposition may at last prove effectual to complete the settlement of Europe. In the meanwhile I congratulate with my own subjects that they are delivered from a consuming Land War and entered on a Peace, the good effects whereof nothing but intestine divisions can obstruct.......There are some who have arrived to that Height of Malice to insinuate that the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover is in danger under my Government. Those who go about thus to distract the minds of men with imaginary dangers can only mean to disturb the present tranquillity and to bring real Mishaps upon us. After all I have done to secure our Religion and your Liberties, and to transmit both safe to Posterity, I cannot mention these proceedings without some degree of Warmth, and I must hope that you will agree with me that attempts to weaken my authority or to render the Possession of the Crown uneasy to me can never be proper means to strengthen the Protestant succession." These remarks were accompanied with the practical suggestion that more rigorous measures might well be taken for the suppression of any unfortunate writers who might dare to support the Whig cause. "I wish," the speech went on to say, "that effectual Care had been taken, as I have often desired, to suppress those seditious papers, by which designing Men have been able to sink Credit, and the innocent have suffered."

This suggestion was soon acted upon. Steele, who had been returned to the new Parliament as member for Stockbridge, had ventured with characteristic imprudence and ill luck to put his name to a

political pamphlet called *The Crisis*, now remembered mainly by its having elicited Swift's famous rejoinder *The Public Spirit of the Whigs*. On the announcement but before the publication of Steele's work, Swift had warned his quondam friend of the probable consequences. "Believe me," he had written, "what thou'st undertaken, May bring in jeopardy thy bacon. For Madmen, children, wits and fools Should never meddle with edge tools." Steele seems himself to have written comparatively little of the pamphlet, the greater part of which is said to have been compiled by Mr William Moore of the Inner Temple, an adept in constitutional law. Steele however had fathered it, and written its Preface and Dedication to the Clergy of the Church of England. He seems to have been scrupulously careful to avoid any cause for prosecution, having taken the precaution to submit it in proof to Addison, Hoadly, Lechmere and others, and to modify it in accordance with their suggestions. Swift himself in his reply to it tells us, "The entire piece consists of a title page, a dedication to the clergy, a preface, an extract from certain Acts of Parliament and about ten pages of dry reflections on the proceedings of the Queen and her servants, which his coadjutors the Earl of Nottingham, Mr Dunton and the Flying Post, had long ago set before us in a much clearer light." But such as it was, it had been widely puffed and circulated, and the Tory Ministry were determined to make an example of Steele, against whom they entertained a strong resentment as a staunch Whig and popular writer. Attention was therefore drawn early in the Session to the pamphlet in the House of Commons by Auditor Foley, who alleged that "it contained several paragraphs tending to sedition, highly reflecting upon Her Majesty, and arraigning her Administration and Government." Steele, appearing in his place in the

House on the 17th of March, owned that he had written and published it. Being called upon for his defence, he took his place at the Bar of the House, supported on one side by Walpole and on the other by Stanhope, and defended himself in a speech of some three hours' duration, Addison being seated near him and prompting him from time to time. His accuser Foley made no reply to his arguments, but contented himself with moving that the paragraphs in question were "scandalous and seditious libels, containing many expressions highly reflecting upon Her Majesty, and upon the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy and Universities of this Kingdom, maliciously insinuating that the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover is in danger under Her Majesty's Administration and tending to alienate the Affections of Her Majesty's good subjects, and to create jealousies and Divisions among them." It would appear from the meagre reports that have come down to us of the debate which followed on this motion that Walpole and Lord Finch, son of the Earl of Nottingham, Swift's "Orator dismal of Nottinghamshire," indulged in far greater freedom of speech than Steele had dared to do either in his pamphlet or in his own defence of it. Walpole asked "why, if Steele was punishable under the law, he was not left to the law? He had written nothing that could bear any criminal construction without the assistance of forced innuendoes, and was Parliament to assume the ungracious part of inferring guilt from mere arbitrary construction? If they were to do so, what advantage to government or the community could be expected to result from such a measure? Were doctrines refuted and truths suppressed by being censured or stigmatised? Steele was only attacked because he was the advocate of the Protestant Succession. His punishment would

[1] Coxe's *Life of Walpole*, I. 78, 80.

be a symptom that the succession was in danger and the ministry were now feeling the pulse of Parliament to see how far they might be able to proceed. General invectives in the pulpit against drinking, fornication, or any particular vice had never been esteemed a reflection on particular persons, unless those persons were guilty of the darling vice against which the preacher inveighed. It was therefore a fair inference from their irritability and resentment against its defender that the darling sin of the present administration was to obstruct the Protestant succession." Finch was equally outspoken in defending that part of the pamphlet, which dealt with the Peace of Utrecht. "We may give it," he said, "all the fine epithets we please, but epithets do not change the nature of things. We may, if we please, call it here honourable ; but I am sure it is accounted Scandalous in Holland, Germany, Portugal and over all Europe except France and Spain. We may call it advantageous, but all the trading part of the nation find it otherwise, and if it be really advantageous, it must be so to the ministry that made it[1]."

We may be sure that both of these speeches were warmly approved of by Governor Pitt, who was among the very respectable minority of 152, who voted against Steele's expulsion, as were also his second son Thomas and his cousin George Pitt of Strathfieldsay.

Within a month after Steele's expulsion, the Ministry regardless of the proverb "qui s'excuse s'accuse," made a further attempt to clear themselves of the stigma that they were intriguing in the interests of the Pretender. They asked both Houses of Parliament for a direct vote that the Protestant Succession was not in danger. The first debate on this question was in the House of Lords, where the vote was only carried by a majority of 76 to 64, that is to say, by

[1] Mahon I. 98.

the decisive votes of the batch of twelve Tory peers created two years before. On the 15th of April it was passed in committee of the Commons by a majority of 256 to 208, the Speaker and his friends voting in the minority. On the following day, it came up on report and passed without a division after a fierce debate, in which Walpole applauding the public spirit of the Speaker said that he despaired of seeing the truth prevail, since notwithstanding the weight of a person of such well-known integrity and eloquence, the majority had carried the vote against reason and argument. Stanhope who followed him, enlarged on the consideration that it was the interest of the French King to bring the Pretender in, and that it was now more than ever in his power to do so. On the next day the Ministry made one more effort to rehabilitate themselves by moving the following address to the Queen from the House of Lords: "We Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects beg Leave to express the just Sense which we have of your Majesty's Goodness to your People, in delivering them by a safe, honourable and advantageous Peace with France and Spain from the heavy Burden of a consuming Land War, unequally carried on and become at last impracticable, and we do most earnestly intreat your Majesty, that you will be pleased notwithstanding the obstructions, which have been or may be thrown in your way, to pursue such Measures as you will judge necessary by completing the Settlement of Europe on the Principles laid down by your Majesty in your Most Gracious Speech from the Throne."

On this address a further angry debate ensued, which is thus reported by Lord Bathurst[1]: "The Duke of Argile spoke with a great deal of warmth, show'd what a Posture the Nation was in to have

[1] *The Wentworth Papers* 375.

commanded any Peace, how weak the Enemy; he said he had since passt thro' their country, and itt was not to be expresst how miserable the People were, but by our cessation of Arms we had Scandalously deserted our Allies, and made a shamefull Peace and so ran down every article: I can't remember the exact words. There was a great deal said on both sides, but nothing cou'd be said new upon that subject which has been so sifted for two years past. The Bishop of London spoke; but itt was only in answer to the Bishop of Sarum" (Burnet) "who endeavour'd to perswade the Lords, for conscience sake not to approve the Peace, which he said was founded upon perfidy, in that we had broke our treaties with our Allies. Att last the Question was carried that the Peace was safe, honourable and advantagious, and to desire her Majesty to go on in such measures as would make the same compleat." The address was carried after a division by a majority of 19 only and was sent down at once to the Commons for their concurrence.

Its reception there was anything but cordial. It reached them on a Saturday, and Peter Wentworth tells us "some Gentlemen said with a great deal of warmth that the House of Lords endeavoured to thrust them blindly into what methods they thought convenient, without allowing them time to deliberate, or giving them opportunity to peruse such Papers as it was absolutely necessary for them to peruse before they could rightly pass their Judgment on affairs, so that the matter was deferred till the next Thursday."

Wentworth was the brother of Lord Strafford, who had been the principal English plenipotentiary in the negotiations for the peace, and was now the Ambassador at the Hague. In the following year Strafford was impeached for his share in this business. It was of the utmost importance to him to have an

[1] *The Wentworth Papers* 371.

authentic report of this debate; and the letter of his brother, from which extracts are given below, was a confidential one, meant for his information only. For this reason notwithstanding its shortcomings, it is historically valuable, as being an unbiased record of the writer's impressions taken down the next day for the information of his brother the Ambassador. It would appear from it that the Ministry had circulated an official paper, referred to in the letter as the "narrative" setting out their case in support of the address[1].

"I was," Wentworth writes, "in the house of commons yesterday to hear the Debate which was about concuring with the lords in their Address. Lord Downs first mov'd for't, and was seconded by Mr Gore, and thirded by Mr Medlicote. Then Mr Walpool made a very long and entertaining discourse against it, and had so many pretty turns that I am angry at my unhappy memory that cannot retain them: shou'd I attempt to repeat after him I shou'd spoil the jokes, but I may tell you in generall that he banter'd and scouted the Narrative which he held in his hand, wch he said he might be very free with, for it came to them signed by nobody and had the Stylle of some late Pamphleeteirs. 'Twas writ without any regard to order of time, so he hoped the house wou'd excuse him, if he hop'd and skipt about in following as wild and loose an account as t'was; 'twas all the Ministry had to say for themselves for making so dishonourable a Peace, and was what made him more averse than before to join with the Lords' address. He told them he did not know what use they intended to make of carrying such a vote, but he fear'd it would not be better then what they made of the votes of the last Parliament, upon wch my Lord Strafford was sent to frighten the Dutch into the Peace.......Mr Bromley answer'd him and defended the Narrative, but not so well as the other had rediculed it. Mr Stanhope spoke only to one point, as to the Duties we were to pay in Spain, wch he said by three Explanatory Articles were left at large, and instead of being at a certainty of ten p.c. it wou'd amount to 18 p.c., and he appealed to Mr Moor whether the Duties of the Alcavalos, Scientos and Mellones were not to be paid besides the duties of 10 p.c. Mr Moor's answer left it upon the uncertainty that if they were paid in King C's time at what the duties were 15 p.c. at

[1] *The Wentworth Papers* 376.

the lowest, it was to be understood to be now paid, wch Mr Stanhope affirm'd would amount to a prohibition. Mr Hasilby" (Aislabie) "was very spart and witty. He play'd much upon the Asciento, but when he came to the affair of the Catalains he seem'd to be serious. A people that the Queen had said she thought herself obliged in honour and conscience to see they had their just rights and privilidges, scandalously abandon'd, but a Reverend Divine that was intimate with the Ministry had let them into the secreet, how it happen'd, for in his Spirit of the Whigs, he treats them as a Parcel of rebells, and as such not to be trusted with the Previledge of giving money, which was very apt to put Republican principles in them. If this Doctrin prevail'd, it might in time be apply'd to them of that house. He concluded, if the ministry could not sleep without such continual healing votes, to save the dignity of the house he wou'd come into giving them an act of endemnity but he dread a Ministry that was too proud to ask one."

Cadogan answered Mr Bromley's vindication of the Cessation of Arms, that part where he asserted that when the Duke of M. was for fighting, a Deputy of the States pull'd out of his pocket an order from the States not to fight. Cadogan said that worthy member was misinformed...and now that he was up he wou'd declare his opinion of the barrier that was given to the Dutch might be taken from them by the French whenever they pleased, Lisle and Condé being theirs. He answered Mr Bromley likewise as to this peace being better than that of Ryswick: that was a conclusion of a ten years' unsuccessful war, this of ten years most successfull: 'twas attended with such success that it even went beyond their hopes or the enemies' fears. If they had been lett to have gone on they wou'd have been in the heart of France. After him Ross spoke.......He was so moderate in his speech that some that sat by me said that he smelt a rat, and might be well of all sides, if a change shou'd happen.

Governor Pits declared himself against every part of the address, and for his part he felt that the French had left us in such a miserable condition that they ought to be thinking of another sort of an Address how to reduce the King of France in a condition, and to be the Arbitrator of Europe; therefore he mov'd that an humble address be presented to her Majesty, that her present Ministry shou'd be sent to France to be his Ministry for three years. This was a jest they say of Harry Killigrew's in the time of King Charles the 2nd, when 'twas suspected that his Ministry was in the Interest of France.

I don't endeavour to recollect what was said for us because you know more then was said. We did not trouble niether to say

much, for we knew our numbers, and so did the Whigs, for after all their violent speechs, they did not devide upon the question: but 'twas carried nemine contradicente.......A moderate Whig told me 'twas never design'd to have a devition but only to show the Queen she was not well served, and as she had made the Peace, would do nothing to disturb her.

After this sessions 'tis much talked of that there will be a change in the Ministry, but whether it be by an intire sett of Whigs or an intire sett of Tories, our Coffee Politians cannot say. 'Tis certain never Ministry has been so much abused in both houses and so little said in their defence, wch they say protends a change.......Some people think you are happy to be out of this hurley-burrly, and that you are not let into the secreets of the several partys; others are of another opinion."

It is clear from the foregoing account that the leading members of the opposition, most of whom attained high office in the next reign, spoke on this important occasion. The fact that Governor Pitt was selected to wind up the debate is an indication of the position which he had already attained amongst the most influential members of his party. His name also appears this session in the *Journals* of the House as serving on the Committee of Privileges and Elections, the most important Parliamentary Committee of the day, whose reports and proceedings take up so large a proportion of the very limited space devoted in the *Journals* to the proceedings of the House and some of whose most delicate duties have now been relegated to Judges of the High Court. His attendance on this Committee must have taken up a considerable part of his available leisure. But probably the most important party work in which he was at this time engaged was assisting in the organisation of the precautionary measures which his son-in-law Stanhope was taking throughout the country, with the object of preventing the success of any attempts that might be made to place the Pretender on the throne, in the not improbable event of the sudden death of the Queen.

[1] *House of Commons Journals*, 11. 475.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE HANOVERIAN SUCCESSION

GOVERNOR PITT'S speech in the Commons debate on the proposal to thank the Queen for her honourable peace of Utrecht was delivered on the 22nd of April 1714. On the 14th of July the session came to an end; and Queen Anne had time to consider whether after all it might not be well to recast her much abused Ministry, who had so little to say in their own defence, and whom the Governor had so bluntly recommended her to hand over to the King of France for the next few years. At a meeting of her Privy Council held at Kensington Palace on the 27th of July, she explained to them in her own simple language the reasons which had led her to decide to remove from office Mrs Masham's wearisome old cousin Harley, whom she had made by this time Earl of Oxford. These, as his own secretary Erasmus Lewis confidentially informed Swift at the time were "that the Lord Treasurer neglected all business; that he was very seldom to be understood; that when he did explain himself, she could not depend upon the truth of what he said; that he never came to her at the time she appointed; that he often came drunk; lastly to crown all, that he behaved himself towards her with bad manners, indecency and disrespect." It is easy to understand that the poor man was somewhat taken aback at this uncomplimentary enumeration of his shortcomings by the Royal Lady, whom he had

served for the last four years so completely to his own satisfaction; but he must, one would think, have often afterwards regretted that he did not at once give up the White Staff, without entering into a painful personal altercation with her, protracted till two o'clock in the following morning. For the excitement and exhaustion, which it entailed, were too much for the Queen's enfeebled constitution; and within the next twenty-four hours she was seized with an apoplectic fit. In the meanwhile Bolingbroke, confidently assuming that he would be invited to take his late chief's place, was entertaining at dinner in his house in Golden Square some of the most eminent members of the opposition, and trying in vain to bring them to terms with the Tories. The next morning on hearing of the Queen's seizure, he called a special meeting of the Privy Council, sending out the summonses only to Tory members. It was held at Kensington and was attended not only by the invited members of the Council, but also by the Whig Dukes of Argyle and Somerset, who claimed the right to take part in it. As the result of their deliberations it was resolved to recommend the Queen to fill up the post of Lord Treasurer without delay and to appoint *pro hâc vice* the Duke of Shrewsbury, who was at that time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and a member of the Tory Ministry. A Deputation from the Council headed by Shrewsbury then proceeded to invade the Queen's bed-chamber, rouse her from her lethargy and apprise her of the recommendations of her Council. She recovered sufficiently to enable her to hand the Staff to Shrewsbury, "bidding him," the deputation reported, "use it for the good of her people." She then sank again into unconsciousness, from which she never rallied, dying on the Sunday morning, without having been able to receive the Sacrament or to sign her will.

On the return of Shrewsbury and his deputation from her bedside to the Council Chamber, a special summons was sent out to all the Privy Councillors in or near London, Whigs and Tories alike, to attend another meeting in the afternoon. At this meeting resolutions were passed to order four regiments up to London at once; to recall seven battalions from Ostend; to lay an embargo on all the ports; and to send an express to Hanover, earnestly requesting the Elector to hasten to Holland where a British squadron would be ready in attendance to bring him over in the event of the Queen's demise. At the same time a reminder was sent to the States of Holland of their guarantee to secure the Protestant succession.

The Queen died between seven and eight o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 1st of August. The Privy Council met at once at St James's Palace, where the Hanoverian resident, who attended, produced a document in the Elector's own hand-writing, nominating eighteen of the principal peers, nearly all of them Whigs, to act as Lords Justices pending his arrival. By the directions of the Council King George was proclaimed in London and Westminster between 2 and 4 o'clock. On the same afternoon Parliament met in accordance with the provisions of the Regency Act, and the oaths were administered to such members as made their appearance. It was then adjourned *de die in diem* till the 5th of August to give time for the remainder to take their oaths. On the 5th a Committee of the House of Commons was nominated to prepare an address to the King, and the Committee of Privileges and Elections was also appointed. It is interesting to note that Governor Pitt's name appears on both Committees. In the meanwhile the Lords Justices, who had appointed Addison as their Clerk, and ordered all despatches

to the Secretary of State to be delivered to him, undertook the whole administration of the affairs of the kingdom.

By these prompt and effective measures the executive Government of the State passed suddenly, but peaceably, without any opposition, out of the hands of the Tories into those of the Whigs, although the latter were still in a hopeless minority in the Commons, and barely held their own in the House of Lords. On the 6th of August, the address to the King from both Houses was considered and passed, condoling with him on the death of the Queen, congratulating him on his accession, assuring him that both Houses would do their utmost to support his undoubted right to the throne against the Pretender and all other persons whatsoever, and expressing their impatient desire for his safe appearance and presence in Great Britain. The revenues granted to the late Queen were voted to him with the exception of those of the Duchy of Cornwall, which by law had devolved on his son, the Prince of Wales.

The success with which this sudden transfer of power from one party in the State to the other was carried out, without a single hitch, without the slightest popular disturbance in London, or one dissentient voice in Parliament, is a striking testimony to the efficiency of the party organisation of the Whigs, who seem to have foreseen and provided against every difficulty that might arise in the event of the Queen's death; to have well considered every detail, and acted boldly and promptly at the critical moment when the time for action had arrived. Their opponents appear to have been paralysed. Atterbury indeed is said to have proposed to Bolingbroke to proclaim the Pretender at Charing Cross, and to have offered himself to head the procession in his lawn sleeves; and on Bolingbroke's refusal to join

him, to have exclaimed with an oath, "There is the best cause in Europe lost for want of a little spirit." But whatever may be the foundation for this story, it is unlikely that the Pretender's cause would have gained much, if Atterbury's suggestion had been adopted. In London and the principal provincial towns the majority of the population was undoubtedly in favour of the Protestant succession. And the Whigs were fully prepared if necessary to meet violence with violence. Under the guidance of Stanhope, the Governor's son-in-law, who was acting as the military adviser of the Whigs, they had, as we learn from his descendant the historian, "entered amongst themselves into an organised association, collected arms and ammunition and nominated officers. They had in readiness several thousand figures of a small fusee in brass, and some few in gold and silver, to be distributed amongst the most zealous followers and the most active chiefs, as signals on the expected day of trial[1]." Stanhope had also taken "every measure for acting with vigour, if necessary, on the demise of the Queen—to seize the Tower, to secure in it the persons of the leading Jacobites, to obtain possession of the outposts and to proclaim the new King." We may not unreasonably surmise that Governor Pitt was aware of and approved these proceedings, and that he had contributed to the necessary expenses which they must have involved. There could be no object on which he would be more willing to spend his money; and as a matter of fact we know that in the following year he paid for the arms and accoutrements of a local levy of Dorset men to fight for the King against the Pretender.

It must also be remembered that a considerable section of the Tories were not Jacobites, and that they still had hopes that the new King might form

[1] Mahon I. 132.

a Coalition Ministry. He had not yet announced the names of his new Ministers or definitely ranged himself on the side of the Whigs. In the meanwhile there were many Tories who hoped to obtain his favours. Whilst his intentions were still undisclosed, the following three letters sent out to Strafford at the Hague, where the King was still staying, indicate the general disposition on the part of the Tories to give him a fair trial[1]. The first is from Strafford's brother Peter Wentworth who says, "At present the striff is who shall show themselves the most Zealous for the Present King George, wch is some disappointment to the leading Whigs, for they did expect some opposition in the manner of granting the Civil List, wch the less experienced Tories were ready to give, but they were better advised by the wiser, who are for proposing everything that's for the honour and dignity of the Crown, so much that some people out of doors of both Partys begin to fear that we shall have the rights and Libertys of Englishmen complymented away." The second letter is from Lord Berkeley, who writes, "I am glad to see your Lordship hath receiv'd such gracious letters from our King. Some that are none your friends are nettled at the favours you mention. The world continues very quiet here, and it is wonderfull that there hath not been soe much as an indiscretion. The Whigs are really peevish to have the lye soe handsomely given them." The third is from Strafford's mother. "Al hear," she says, "are in great rapturs of the King, and say he is the Wysist and Richis Prince in Yoarup: I hope he will prove soe."

If Bolingbroke himself entertained any hopes of becoming a member of the new Ministry, he was very soon disillusioned. On the 31st of August, whilst the King was still at the Hague, three of the Lords

[1] *The Wentworth Papers* 415, 417.

Justices, Shrewsbury, Somerset and Cowper came over to the Cockpit; informed him that Lord Townshend had been appointed as his successor; took from him his seals; sealed up his papers, and locked the doors of his late office against him. "To be removed," he wrote to Atterbury, "was neither matter of surprise nor of concern to me. But the manner of my removal shocked me for at least two minutes......The grief of my soul is this: that the Tory party is gone."

The King and the Prince of Wales displayed no indecent haste to enter into their inheritance. It was not until the 18th of September that they landed at Greenwich, where a vast concourse of the principal nobility and gentry were assembled to welcome them, and to accompany them on the following day in coaches to St James's Palace. We may not unreasonably conjecture that Governor Pitt's house in Pall Mall was grandly illuminated on this occasion; and that he gave a sumptuous entertainment that evening to his numerous friends.

A few days later the ministerial appointments were announced. His son-in-law Stanhope was made Second Secretary of State, and his colleague Walpole Paymaster of the Forces. Stanhope was the only member of the new Cabinet who had a seat in the House of Commons. It was a grand time for the Governor. On the Sunday before the Queen's death his daughter Essex had been married at St James's Church in great pomp to Cholmondeley[1]. The hated Tories were out; their two leaders disgraced; the Hanoverian succession safe; and his son-in-law in high favour with the new King, who graciously deigned to receive the Governor himself, and to admire his great diamond. "I was this day," he writes to Robert on the 2nd of October[2], "above an hour with the King and Prince; certainly their

[1] Hedges 3. 159.

[2] Dropmore 1. 50.

aspects promises prosperity to the country. I showed them the great diamond, which they admired and seemed desireous of it, but, I believe, hope the nation will give it."

The day after the Coronation Stanhope left England on a secret mission to the Hague and Vienna, with the object of removing the friction that had arisen between Holland and Austria in the matter of the Barrier Treaty. He returned to London early in January, before the issue of the two Royal Proclamations dissolving the present Parliament and summoning a new one. In the latter the King advised the electors in the choice of their representatives to "have a particular regard to such as showed a firmness to the Protestant succession when it was in danger." The electors displayed their loyalty by following the unconstitutional advice thus given to them, and the Whigs were returned with a large majority. One of the results of the election was that Governor Pitt and his three sons obtained seats in the House of Commons, the Governor for Thirsk; Robert Pitt for Old Sarum; Thomas Pitt, now a Colonel of Dragoons, for Wilton; and John Pitt for Hindon[1]. The Houses met on the 17th of March; and it at once became apparent that the Whigs were by no means minded to let bygones be bygones. The King's speech from the throne contained the following paragraphs:

"It were to be wished that the unparalleled successes of a War, which was so wisely and chearfully supported by this Nation, in order to procure a favourable Peace, had been attended with a suitable Conclusion. But it is with Concern I must tell you, that some Conditions even of this Peace essential to the security and Trade of Great Britain are not yet duly executed, and the Performance of the whole may be looked upon as precarious, until we shall have found defensive Alliances to guaranty the present treaties.

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 36, 37.

The Pretender, who still resides in Lorrain threatens to disturb us; and boasts of the Assistance which he still expects here to repair his former Disappointments."

These paragraphs elicited the following reply in the address from the Commons, drawn up by a Committee, of which Governor Pitt was again a member.

"We are sensible of your Majesty's Goodness expressed to those who have distinguished themselves by their zeal and Firmness for the Protestant succession. And as we doubt not but the Wisdom and Steadiness of your Government will unite the hearts of all your faithful subjects in duty and affection to your Sacred Person, so we most humbly beg leave to assure Your Majesty, that we not only highly resent the wicked Insinuations used to disquiet the Minds of your subjects; but are resolved to the utmost of our Power to suppress and extinguish that evil disposition that is at work to deprive your Majesty of the Affection of your People.

It is with just resentment we observe that the Pretender still resides in Lorrain, and that he has the Presumption by declarations from thence to stir up Your Majesty's subjects to Rebellion. But that which raises the utmost indignation of your Commons is that it appears therein that his hopes were built upon the Measures that had been taken for some time past in Great Britain. *It shall be our business to trace out those measures, whereon he based his Hopes, and to bring the authors of them to Condign Punishment.*"

This address was not allowed to pass without a division. But it was carried by a majority of 244 to 138. The threat in the last of the above paragraphs was occasioned by the ill-advised wording of the Pretender's manifesto, in which, regardless of the consequences to his supporters in the late Ministry, he had alleged as an excuse for his non-appearance in England during the late Queen's lifetime the fact that "he could not doubt for some time past her good intentions towards him."

The address left the House of Commons on the 24th of March. Two days afterwards Bolingbroke fled from London disguised as a servant of a messenger in the French Embassy, and got safely out of the

country, leaving his late colleagues to bear the brunt of the coming impeachments. On arriving at Paris he went to the English Ambassador, to protest that he would enter into no disloyal engagements, and wrote with similar assurances to Stanhope. But in the following July he joined the Pretender in Lorraine, and accepted from him the seals of Secretary of State.

Meanwhile such official papers, relating to the negotiations for the late peace and the cessation of hostilities, as had not been destroyed or taken away by Bolingbroke, had been very laboriously collected for the Government; and were presented to the House of Commons by Stanhope on the 9th of April. They were very voluminous and were bound up in twelve large volumes and three small books. The House resolved that they should be carefully scrutinised by a Committee of Secrecy, who should report what they found in them, sitting from day to day without intermission until their task was completed, with power to call for persons, papers and records. This Committee was to consist of twenty-one members chosen by ballot. On the 11th of April the members of the House deposited their selected lists of names in the glasses provided for the purpose: and when the result was made known, it was found, as was expected, that the Committee was almost exclusively composed of the new Ministry and their principal supporters. Governor Pitt was no doubt gratified at obtaining no less than 246 votes in this ballot, which gave him the honour of serving on the Committee. Heavy as the work might be, it must have been a labour of love in which he was proud to take part—to investigate at first hand all the evidence available of the machinations of the Jacobites in the late Ministry; to cross-examine the witnesses; to confirm the suspicions he had so long entertained;

and to assist in preparing the scandalous revelations which he must have hoped were soon to be made for the enlightenment of the British public.

It took the Committee nearly two months to get to the bottom of this business. On the 9th of June Walpole presented their report to the House. It was a very lengthy one and took him five hours to read aloud. On the following day, Sir Thomas Hanmer, the late Speaker, moved that its consideration should be deferred until the 21st. This proposal was strongly opposed by Walpole and Stanhope and negatived by the House. Walpole then moved two resolutions, one for the impeachment of Bolingbroke and the other for the impeachment of Oxford. Both were carried without a division; and it was referred to the Committee of Secrecy to prepare the articles of impeachment. The report was then ordered to be printed and its further consideration was adjourned until the 21st.

In the interval the Government had time to consider who else should be impeached. The main question which they had to decide was how to deal with the Duke of Ormond, who after the flight of Bolingbroke, was the most prominent Jacobite left in the country. Ormond was now living in ostentatious magnificence at Richmond, holding public levées attended by the principal members of the opposition and many well-known Jacobites. Bolingbroke and Oxford were both to be impeached for high treason; but it would have been very difficult to substantiate any similar charge against Ormond on the evidence collected by the Committee of Secrecy; for as a military commander he had had no option but to obey the orders transmitted to him by the late Ministry and Queen for the cessation of hostilities with the French forces. At the same time to have allowed him to continue at large at the present crisis,

would have been a course fraught with considerable danger to the Whigs, as it would have been an encouragement to other prominent Jacobites to follow his example. He was strongly suspected of being at the bottom of the riots which were now spasmodically breaking out in various parts of the country, and of being engaged in treasonable correspondence with the Pretender. As a matter of fact he was actually making arrangements for a wide-spread insurrection in the west of England, and plotting for an invasion of the south coast with armed forces from France. But though the Ministry had strong suspicions that this was the case, they had at present no sufficient proofs to justify their arresting him, and he had very powerful friends in both Houses. Overtures were therefore made to him on the King's behalf, in which he was given to understand that if he would privately assure the King of his loyalty, and undertake not to espouse the cause of the Pretender, no proceedings would be taken against him. These overtures having failed, it was decided to impeach him of high treason, along with Bolingbroke and Oxford, on the evidence, weak as it was against him, contained in the report of the Committee of Secrecy. Accordingly on the further consideration of that report on the 21st of June, Stanhope moved his impeachment, and carried it on a division, but only by the narrow majority of 47, after a protracted debate, in which several members who were undoubted supporters of the Protestant succession spoke strongly against the injustice of this method of procedure. The only justification that can be offered for thus arraigning the Duke for alleged treasonable offences of which the government had no evidence that he was guilty, is that its result was to prevent him from committing other treasonable offences which he undoubtedly had in contemplation; and to upset the arrangement he

had agreed with the Pretender to carry out, which was to remain at his post in England encouraging the Jacobites, until their plans were matured and the preparations for the rebellion were completed. This he did not venture to do; but following Bolingbroke's example escaped in secrecy to France, where his arrival created great consternation amongst the Pretender's friends, who were relying on his undertaking to continue in England to lull the suspicions of the Ministry, and arrange for a general rising of the Jacobites in the western counties. His flight following so closely on that of Bolingbroke was construed as an admission of his guilt; and made it easy for the Whigs not only to pass bills of attainder against both almost without opposition, but also to take extraordinary measures, which Parliament might otherwise have hesitated to sanction, for the protection of the throne and the summary arrest of all persons suspected by the executive of plotting against the King.

On the 21st of July in a speech from the throne the King made a special appeal to the Commons for assistance. Referring to the recent Jacobite riots, which had broken out in several parts of the country, he said, "I am sorry to find that such a spirit of rebellion has discovered itself, as leaves no room to doubt that these disorders are set on foot and encouraged by Persons disaffected to my Government in expectation of being supported from abroad. The Preservation of our excellent Constitution, and the Security of our Holy Religion has been and always shall be my chief care, and I cannot question but your concern for these invaluable blessings is so great, as not to let them be exposed to such attempts as I have certain advices are preparing by the Pretender from abroad and carrying on at home by a restless party in his favour." In their address in reply to this speech the Commons informed him "That

this House will with their lives and fortunes stand by and support His Majesty against all his open and secret enemies," and desired him "That he would immediately give directions for fitting out such a number of ships as might effectually guard the Coast, and to issue Commissions for augmenting his forces by land," assuring him that "this House will without loss of time effectually enable him to raise and maintain such a number of forces by sea and land as shall be necessary for the defence of His Sacred Person and for the security of his Kindgom." On the same day a Bill was brought in empowering the King to secure and detain such persons as he might suspect were conspiring against his person and government. This Bill was passed on the 23rd of July and sent up to the Lords, who the same day informed the Commons that they had agreed to it, and passed it without any amendment. It was not long before the Government found it necessary to avail themselves of the extraordinary powers thus conferred upon them.

Few ministers can have had a more trying session than Stanhope had that year; but in the midst of his anxieties he had done his best to help his brother-in-law Robert Pitt to a sinecure. Twelve years had now passed since Robert, when announcing his marriage to his father, had expressed a hope that he might be able to obtain some "genteel employment by the intercession" of his wife's family. This hope had not been realised. But now Stanhope had gone out of his way to obtain a "genteel employment" for him in the household of the Prince of Wales. The following courteous and conciliatory letter from Stanhope seems to have been written in reply to Robert's enquiries as to its nature[1].

"1715. Sep. 16. London. I assure you that, when in discourse with your father, the office of Clark of the Green Cloath

[1] Dropmore I. 51.

to the Prince was mentioned, it was onely looked upon, as you truly guess it, as an introduction to such future advancement, as, I am confident, you will very justly be thought to deserve when you shall be better known to the King and Prince, I cannot precisely answer what you desire to be informed of, no establishment being yett made: but what I have heard is, that the salairy will be £500, the attendance little or none, at least so long as the two families live under one roof. There can certainly be no reason for a new election for the reason you mention. I believe the establishment will be fixed in about a fortnight; and it will be a very great satisfaction to me if any endeavours of mine for your service are acceptable to you."

Owing to the great pressure of urgent business, Parliament was not prorogued that year till the 21st of September. Before the Houses had risen, Governor Pitt, who had been heavily worked on the numerous Parliamentary Committees on which he was member that year, had paid a short visit to his daughter Essex at her new home in Cheshire. During his absence from town the rebellion had broken out in Scotland, where the Pretender's standard had been raised by the Earl of Mar. The rising of the Jacobites in the west of England, which was to have taken place simultaneously, was only frustrated by the prompt exercise by Stanhope of the extraordinary powers of arrest conferred by the recent Act. Three suspected noblemen had been committed to the Tower; and on the last day of the session a message from the King was brought down to the Commons, desiring their consent to the apprehension of six members of the House. On getting back to town, the Governor wrote to Robert[1]:

"1715. September 27. Pall Mall. I reached home last night after a pleasant journey from Vale Royal. On my way at Coventry, news met me of the arrest of three peers and six members of the House of Commons: among the latter being your bosom friend the Esquire of Combe" (Mr Harvey[2]) "who

[1] Dropmore I. 52.

[2] Who had formerly sat as member for Old Sarum with the Governor.

yesterday stabbed himself in three places in the Messenger's house. It is said to-day that he will recover. I hear that letters from his friends have been found among his papers, and hope there are none that can compromise you. I have heard since I came to towne that you are strooke in with your old hellish acquaintance, and in all your discourses, are speaking in favour of that villainous traytor Ormond. The design of these packs of villains that are now taken up was noe less than to cut off the whole Royal family, and sett the cursed Pretender on the throne, in which miserable tragedy I should have had my share. God still avert it! Greater discoverys are expected will be made every day; let whoso will be concerned, I wish they may have their demerits."

Two days later he writes again:

"1715. September 29. Pall Mall. I received yours of yesterday, when dining at Sir Richard Onslow's with Mr Stanhope. We gave him your letters to read. He said that a letter from you, of no importance, had been found among Mr Harvey's papers. He was going to a Cabinet, but we shall send an answer from him by next post.

You may remember that hee" (Mr Harvey) "and I signed bonds, which was the 13th of July last, that the survivor of us two should receive from the heirs of the deceased 1000 guineas, when in his letters of January before hee was engaged in the hellish design of cutting off the Royall family, and for some time before it appeares under his own hand, that hee had corresponded with the Pretender; and is said has like to recover of his wounds; but sure hee can never save his life but by an ample confession; and it is said there are 160 or more men of estates that have signed an association, and have obliged 'emselves or paid £2000 each towards the charge of rayseing forces to bring in the Pretender. Since last post, I have had it reiterated to mee that in all company you are vindicating Ormond, and Bull(ingbroke), the two vilest rebells that ever were in any nation, and that you still adhere to your cursed Tory principles, and keep those wretches company who hoped by this time to have murthered the whole Royall family; in which catastrophe your father was sure to fall, as was certainly designed by the signing of those bonds, and to have taken possession of my house and all that could be found therein; never a viler man in the world and the same stamp all your acquaintance. I think of being at Stratford on Sunday or Monday. You may remember the advice I gave you from the time of my arrival; but others, who you will be bound for ever to curse, prevayled."

On the 1st of October he writes again from Pall Mall:

"I dined too day at Mr Stanhope's, when he delivered mee the inclosed. The game is still carrying on, and it is said that the D(uke) of O(rmond) and Sir William W(yndham) are to appear in the West Suddenly, for it is wrott from France the Duke is come thence. A ship came into the Downs on Thursday from Fort St George. Poor Benyon and Mr Fleetwood are dead. In the former I have had a great loss, which delays my leaving town till Monday morning when Cousin Chapple will come with me. We shall be with you on Tuesday night, and proceed to Dorset on Thursday morning. The Duke of Bolton will be at Winchester on Tuesday, and if you are there, you may meet us at Stockbridge. I do not answer your wife's letter as I am coming so soon. The children are well and will dine with me tomorrow."

One of the objects of the Governor's visit to Stratford and Blandford at this crisis was to arrange for the formation of a regiment of Dorset men at his own cost to fight, if need be, for the King. The whole of the regular troops in the country at the disposal of the Government did not amount to 8000 men; and it had been discovered that local associations had been formed in several districts for enlisting and arming the adherents of the Pretender. After making his arrangements for this purpose the Governor returned to town.

In the meanwhile on the 6th of October, the rebellion had broken out in Northumberland, headed by Mr Forster, one of the members for that county, and the Earl of Derwentwater, whose names had been included in the recent warrants for arrest but who had managed to escape from London by starting a few hours before the seizure of their friends. On getting back to town, Governor Pitt wrote to Robert[1]:

"1715. October 25. Pall Mall. I dined at Mr Grevill's and lay at Winchester on Friday. On Saturday night we got to Cousin Chapple's, and rested there till Monday, arriving here last night.

[1] Dropmore I. 53.

By what I can hitherto observe, we are like to have great confusion, and with the end of it, bee not (far from) utter ruine. The rebels in Northumberland are joyned those of Scotland, and are marched towards Glascow. It is rumoured that the D(uke) of Som(erse)t will bee out, and there is a report in towne that Sir E. Sey(mou)r and Colonel Horner (are under recognisances) the former £4000 the latter £3000. They had ingaged to assist the rebels, which I can hardly believe it, but as times goe, one can hardly find a friend to trust. It is said you will soon heare, if not already of the D(uke) of Or(mon)d's landing in the West or in Wales, for hee is gone from Paris.

I hope you have met with the officers of my regiment. Let me know whether arms have come down for it, and what progress has been made towards the well-settling of the militia, in which I would have you act for me. Give my service to General Earle, Mr Trenchard and all our friends. There are various reports of Mr Harvey's recovery.

I hope you have a good lock on the door. Here are great robbing and housebreaking, and I believe you will find it as bad in the country. I shall send back the master key which I brought away. You see what a call the Bank has made, in which I must pay £3000, and stocks fall prodigiously."

Two days later he writes again:

"1715. Oct. 27. Pall Mall. Here is afoot associations from severall countys. I wish you could bee at the head of procuring one to Dorsett and Wiltshire, about which consult Mr Earle. I here inclose the Dayly Corant, wherein is one from Nottingham. If it bee thought necessary I can send arms for one hundred foot and accoutrements for 20 horse; and tell General Earle, if the gentlemen subscribe, lett him incert mee for what number of horse hee thinks fitt, and I will immediately appear with them. The D(uke) of Somersett is out."

On the 29th of October he writes from Pall Mall:

"There were letters this day from France, which mentions that the D(uke) of O(rmond) was sayled thence in a ship with 7000 arms, officers and ammunition suitable thereto. I hope though you did not vote against him, you will fight against him, for there was never such a villanous scheme layd for the destruction of a government as to Church and State in this world.

Deputy Lieutenants should contrive that where two or more persons contribute for a horse or foot soldier, they should be as near neighbours as possible. I wish my own Company of foot to be raised in and about Blandford, and in ten days can send arms to equip 100 foot completely."

It would appear from the next letter that the Governor's suggestion for the formation of an association in Dorset and Wiltshire under the directions of General Earle had been adopted; and that some information about it had been sent to London by Robert. For his father writes to him:

"1715. November 8. Pall Mall. What the General has subscribed for me I will make good with all haste imagineable. I wonder hee should not desire more carbines for the horse, for suppose they should be oblidged in the inclosures to fight afoot; besides they will look more formidable and be in the nature of dragoons.

The rebels joined with those of Northumberland, are marching for Lancashire: Carpenter being in their rear, and Wills with 10 regiments in their front, we hope for a good account of them in a few days. Your brother is with one of the 10 regiments."

The brother here referred to was Governor Pitt's second son Thomas, who was in command of a regiment of dragoons on this occasion, and took part in the coming defeat of the rebels at Preston of which the Governor writes to Robert thus:

"1715. November 17. Pall Mall. I received intelligence yesterday morning, at 6 o'clock, from your brother of the surrender of the rebels, numbering 4000 or 5000, at Preston, Lords Derwentwater and Widdrington and Macintosh's son being hostages. The news was confirmed at 10 o'clock by an express brought by Colonel Nassau to the King. The lords, gentlemen and clergy are to be brought up, of the last it is reported, there are seventeen of the church of England, and many more Popish priests. Sir R. B. is not among them. About 100 of our men have been killed or wounded; as for the rebels, I never heard of such scoundrels. Your brother and all our friends are well."

"1715. Nov 26. Pall Mall. That affaire in Scotland" (the battle of Sheriffmuir) "was but little better than a drawne battle. The Dutch troops are all marching thither and some of our owne. It is believed the Pretender is there and that Ormond is somewhere lurking in England. The rebells att Preston are bringing up to towne. Your brother is well, whose regiment took their onely standard with the motto *Amor regis et patriæ tantum valet.* The Jacobites and Papists hereabouts are as insolent as ever."

From his next letter it would seem that the excitement he had lately gone through was beginning to tell upon the old man.

"Writing now," he says on the 28th of November, "is not so much my talent as formerly. Desire of ease and retirement comes on with age, and it is as much as I can compass to write what is necessary for me.

This day William Windham and Cousin Chapple dined with mee, and told mee the Salisbury rebels or rioters were brought up on Saturday last; there being but five appeared who were sent over to the King's Bench till next terme, against when they will consider of further punishment.......The rascal I depended on has disappointed me of my saddles, but I shall have them in a fortnight and the 100 arms of foot I expect this week."

The rebellion in England was now over, and that in Scotland was doomed. For 5000 Dutch troops had arrived and were marching northwards to join the King's forces there. In England the prompt seizure and flight of the leading Jacobites, the blockade of the French ports in the Channel, which had prevented the importation of troops and arms from France, and the admirable military arrangements which had been made by Stanhope, had effectually defeated the projects of the Pretender, whose cause had received a further blow by the death in September of Louis the Fourteenth. The Government of France had now devolved on the Regent, who was by no means inclined to risk a fresh war with England, although, as will be seen, Governor Pitt entertained great doubts of his sincerity, which were confirmed by the Pretender's landing in Scotland towards the end of December. In the meanwhile Stanhope had not forgotten his promise to Robert, although its fulfilment had been postponed by the stirring events, that had been occurring. On the 17th of December, the Governor wrote to Robert from Pall Mall, "By what I hear, Mr Stanhope's promise to you will be performed before Parliament meets. Those rebels that have been brought up will not confess anything

to the prejudice of their party; from which I infer they are still carrying on their villany; and the Regent on the other side has doubtless assisted them, and has put a project afoot of rayseing the Coyne, by which he will amass a vast sum of money. I wish it bee not made use of against us in favour of the Pretender. Not a little talk here of George Pitt, his son, and Cousin Ryves refusing to sign the Association."

On the 5th of January he writes again, this time from the Secret Committee, which was sitting at the House of Commons—"I have but time to tell you the Pretender is in Scotland. I believe you'l heare of Ormond in few days in England or in Ireland[1]."

These anticipations were not realised. Before the end of the month the Pretender had left Scotland for France; and the Scotch rebels had returned to their homes. Parliament met again on the 9th of January, when the seven rebel peers being impeached, six of them pleaded guilty, throwing themselves on the King's mercy, and preparations were made for the trial of the seventh, Lord Wintoun. Stanhope now had time to complete his job for his brother-in-law. On the 21st, the Governor wrote to Robert:

"In mine last post I wrote you that Orlando Bridgman, Mr Evelin of Surrey, Colonel Selwin and yourself were of the Greene Cloth to the Prince. I undertooke to Mr Stanhope that you would accept it; they others kissed the Prince's hand yesterday. I never asked what the salary was, but I heare 'tis £500 per annum, with those advantages I wrote you. This is a footeing for you, which I hope you'l soe improve as to lett the King and Prince see that you are capable to serve 'em in any imploy, and what I advise you to is to shun the company of your old comrades as you would the plague, for they are most of 'em in actuall rebellion, or abettors, or those of avow'd indifference.

This day the King came to the House (speech not yett printed) purport was the Pretender was of a certainty in Scotland, and that hee was promised forreigne assistance, hinting France.

[1] Dropmore I. 51.

The ministers told us of a ship gone from Callais with my Lord Melford's sone and 100 officers, and all those ports about full of Irish, Scotts and English, and that there's an armament making att Ryone. Some say Ormond is there. My opinion is that the French, as soone as they hear the Pretender is crowned, they'l receive an Embassador from him, which will oblidge ours to come away, and then nothing less than a war can ensue, and to support it a tax on land of four shillings in the pound will give such a handle to the Jacobites as that you'l find their rebellious risks and tumults insuperable. For my part I see nothing attending us but ruine and confusion, and this is the consequence of the last cursed reigne, and what France is now doeing is the bargaine for which the fruits of our victory's were given up, that villanous cessation sett afoot, that cursed peace made, and our commerce sacrificed, 'tis shocking to the last degree to consider seriously to what condition wee are reduced. Wee have few Torys in the House that appeare, soe they traduce us by the name of a Rump Parliament, and we doe 'em by the names of Jacobites and Papists. I think of waiting tomorrow on the Prince to thank him for the honour he has done you."

A week later, writing to Robert's wife, the Governor expressed his disappointment that his son had not yet arrived in town to take up his appointment. "I did hope," he says, "by this to have seene your husband in towne, and his not being soe, occasions various speculations."

Robert's delay in coming up to town seems to have been caused partly by his reluctance to meet his sister who was coming to stay at his father's house. It would appear that he had written to the Governor, suggesting that her visit should be postponed for a while. His father wrote angrily in reply:

"1715. February 7th. Pall Mall. I receiv'd yours of the 5th to which I shall only answere that my house and all I have is at my owne disposall and shall be soe. I think you have allready put a more than ordinary slight on the Prince's favour, and those that obtained it for you. I do not doubt but you still adhere to the advice of your old Jacobite friends, who I hope to live to see confounded and all their adherents. You may stay in the country or come. It is all one to me."

When at last Robert came, his stay must have been a short one, and he seems to have made himself as offensive as possible both to his father and sister, if we may judge from the following extract from a letter sent to him from his father-in-law General Stewart on the 1st of March after his return to Stratford.

"I must here take occasion to acquainte you with a particular which I had in a visset from a reall friende and relation of yours, who told mee your father in discourse with him, in some passion, highley resented your behaviour when hee brought your sister's child in his arms into the company who all except yourself took notice of the child; nor that you would not have the complesance to go into the next room to see your sister who was that moment come to towne; and ended his discourse by saying it should not be the better for you. When your friende told me this, he saide, as matters stand, hee thought what you then did was highley imprudent, for considering your father's passion and positive temper, and wholly in the power and influenced by those who are no friends of yours, ading that his fortune being all of his owne acquiring and at his owne disposall, except the little hee had already settled on you, hee dreaded the consequence, and wished for your owne and your childrens sakes you would moderate your resentments, and take some proper method to ingratiate yourself with your father. This I thought highly for your service to know[1]."

At the instigation of his advisers, General Stewart and George Pitt of Strathfieldsay, Robert was induced to send his father some explanation of his extraordinary conduct on this occasion. But it seems to have been couched in terms that had the effect of increasing his father's irritation, if we may judge from the result as reported to Robert in a further letter from the General, who writes:

"After receaving the coppy of your letter to your father, which I was strictly injoined not to sho to any but my wife, I sent twice to him that if at home, I would waite on him, but boath times without success. Hee at last made mee a visset and after siting a good while, without taking any notice or giving any opportunity

[1] Dropmore I. 56.

of mentioning you, my wife came into the room, and sone after he fell into a violent passion, declaring his resentment upon a letter you writ to him; to which wee both seemed to bee strangers and exprest concerne that you should do anything to give him so great disturbance. Hee then said hee would bring the letter to sho us, which hee has not yet don.......Two days ago the girles" (Robert's daughters) "being at my house, your father came to make them and us a vissett. My wife being in the rome, wee expected after the girles were gon out, hee would have shone us your letter but still he tooke no notice of any thing. At last my wife asked, if hee had writ to you or heard anything lately from you, to which he answered, in some passion, that he had received a long letter from you which he threw by without reading, which gave us boath a good deale of concerne, and then wee offered to enter into some buisnesse upon that affaire, which he industriously waved and so tooke his leave. I must at the same time acquainte you that hee is extremely kinde to your children, and is making the girles very fine, which Mrs Cholmondely with care and kindness manages for them."

It would seem from a passage in this letter that Robert, notwithstanding his constant complaints of his straitened circumstances, had threatened to throw up his appointment in the household of the Prince of Wales, for the General says, "You seeme resolved to resigne your employment. Wee most earnestly desire you will not do anything in it till you come to towne, and without consulting George Pitt who is not onely a friende, but is honest and able to advise you for the best[1]."

The perverseness of Robert Pitt throughout the whole of this business is very characteristic. He seems to have displayed a malicious ingenuity in irritating his father in every possible way, contemptuously disregarding his wishes and advice, and manifesting a determination to continue on bad terms with his sisters, notwithstanding the kindness of Mrs Cholmondeley to his daughters and the substantial services which his brother-in-law Stanhope

[1] Dropmore I. 58.

had rendered him. It is clear from other letters from General Stewart that Stanhope was now helping him in other business matters, besides obtaining for him his long wished for sinecure, which he had accepted with so bad a grace, and had even threatened to throw up, a threat which it would seem he was only prevented from carrying out by the earnest representations of his wife's parents. His behaviour on this as on so many other occasions, might well have broken down the patience of a far more long-suffering parent than the Governor.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE GOVERNORSHIP OF JAMAICA

AFTER the collapse of the rebellion, the next subject on which friction seems to have arisen between Robert Pitt and his father was the Septennial Bill, by which it was proposed to repeal the Triennial Act and to extend the life of Parliaments from three to seven years. On this purely political question it was natural that whilst the father was strongly in favour of the extension, which would keep the Whig party in for four years longer, the son should side with the Tories in opposing it. In doing so, he ignored the advice of his kinsman George Pitt, who, although he himself voted against the Bill, evidently thought that this was a point on which Robert might properly give way; and accordingly wrote to him on the 12th of April:

"I do not doubt you will avoid all occasions of giveing distast about the politicks: and will take measures about comeing to town accordingly. The Bill for suspending the Triennial Act is commenced in the House of Lords, and it is said, will pass by a majority of twenty at least. In our House there is no doubt at all of its success, so that some people now hold their noses very high; some that they are senators for life, others that their places are as good as freeholds[1]."

Robert did not see fit to follow his cousin's advice on this occasion. His father displayed some irritation at his conduct, as appears from a letter, which

[1] Dropmore I. 58.

he wrote to his daughter-in-law, in which he says of her husband:

"There are not a few speculations on his behaviour to the Prince, and the reason he forbears to come up at this time. The Bill will pass without him, maugre the opposition of the cursed caball, of which hee has all along made one, and has as much contributed to the ruine of this kingdom as any in it. I shall not admire, if the Pretender give him his quietus, as soone as he sees him. What interest could I expect to have, when I could not influence my son to come into measures to preserve, what he had not spent mee[1]?"

The Septennial Bill passed the Commons on the 8th of June. That the Governor's interest with the Ministry had not been seriously impaired by his son's political inaction is clear from the following letter written to Robert by his father.

"1716. June 19. Pall Mall. I this day kissed hands of the King, the Prince and the Princess on being appointed Governor of Jamaica; and shall embark for that island at the end of August. Lady Grandison has just been here to wish me joy of the honour the King has done me."

Lady Grandison might well wish him joy. Nothing could have been more convenient for her and her husband, the General, than to get the old gentleman out of the country with as little delay as possible. The longer he stayed in England, the greater was the danger of the breach between him and Robert becoming irreparable. The sooner he was shipped off, the sooner would she and her husband be relieved of the intolerable burden of scheming to induce Robert to behave with common decency towards his father, and his father to overlook his son's manifold delinquencies. If the climate of the West Indies were to prove fatal to the tough old man, so much the sooner would their daughter and her children enter into their inheritance. The King's selection of the Governor to this post may well have

[1] Dropmore I. 59.

been regarded by the old couple as a signal instance of the interposition of Providence on their behalf; and it is clear, from some of their letters which have survived, that they spared no pains to improve the occasion.

That the Governor himself should have been willing to accept the appointment is more surprising. He was now in the sixty-fourth year of his age. He had lived a laborious, exciting and exhausting life, nearly one half of it in an enervating and unhealthy climate. Only a few months before he had written to his son, "Desire of ease and retirement comes on with age, and it is as much as I can compass to write what is necessary for me." He had attained an influential and honourable position in Parliament, the duties of which he seems to have taken much gratification in discharging. Nevertheless he appears to have been as ready to go out to Jamaica, as he had been to undertake the Governorship of Fort St George some nineteen years before. Amongst the reasons that led him to accept the appointment, we may not unreasonably suppose that one was his desire to repeat in the Western world the successes he had won in the East. Jamaica was as pre-eminently the headquarters of the English trade in the West Indies as Fort St George had been in India during his Presidency. He had seen Madras grow under his rule in strength and importance until it had become, to quote his own words, "the jewel of a colony"; and he may have hoped to do as much for Jamaica. He had few family ties to keep him at this time in England. His daughters, his greatest care, had both been comfortably provided for. He must have been as anxious to get away from Robert, as Robert must have been to get rid of him. He had done his best by his other two sons. Thomas had lately distinguished himself at Preston in

command of his regiment of dragoons. John had got his commission in the Guards. Both were now well started in life, with safe seats in Parliament, and likely to do as well for themselves in his absence as they would if he remained at home.

He was therefore free to follow his own inclinations at this crisis; and the prospect of starting a new life in the New World, unembarrassed by the perpetual quarrels of his children, had evidently attractions for him. He was, moreover, a thrifty man. The great diamond was still unsold. The Governorship of Jamaica would give him an opportunity of curtailing his own expenses, and adding to his fortune. He loved power, and like most masterful men had a high opinion of his own abilities. At Fort St George he had constantly been thwarted by his enemies on the Court of the East India Company; compelled to keep as his second in command a man whom he loathed; and subjected to unmerited censure for some of his best work. In Jamaica he may well have hoped to have a free hand and to rely with safety in any emergency on the hearty support of the Home Government, seeing that Stanhope his son-in-law was now Secretary of State, and on closer terms of intimacy with the King than any other Minister.

When he first accepted the appointment, he hoped, as we have seen, to be able to leave England by the end of August. But he soon found this impossible. On the 25th of that month he writes to his son Robert from Pall Mall, "I shall hardly go so soon as I intended, and shall take shipping from Portsmouth[1]." A few days later, writing to his daughter-in-law, he says, "I am busy night and day to prepare for my departure, being what I most long to see."

On accepting the Governorship of Jamaica, he

[1] Dropmore I. 59.

had vacated his seat in the House of Commons, and had made arrangements for the election of his successor. He had a great deal of business to get through in connexion with his own private affairs before he could leave England; to make up his accounts; to settle the disposition of his property; and arrange for the conduct of his financial affairs during his absence. In some of these matters he availed himself of the services of his cousin Mr William Chapple of the Middle Temple, whom he subsequently made one of the executors of his will. Writing to Robert, he says:

"1716. September 4. Pall Mall. Cousin Chapple says you have the writings as to the farm and parsonage. I would have all by mee to make my settlements effectual. I hope Mr Jolly will send all up, and to save postage, under the cover of the Colonel. My house is full" (of visitors) "and I rarely see any of them but at dinner: nor have the least time to spend with visitors, being anxious to settle matters as they ought to be, before I go. I return Grist's paper, of which I can form no judgment, but desire that all may be done with good husbandry and no more of the usual profuseness and carelessness. Grist must be well looked after. You must draw off a hogshead of new claret, for mine is packed up; we must think of some way to send the beer to Portsmouth[1]."

On receiving Robert's reply, he writes:

"1716. September 8. Pall Mall. I received the writeings and sent them to Cosin Chapple. Your accounts which are for great sums, being without any one date, gives mee great trouble in settling my affaires; therefore pray bring up all letters received and every scrip of paper that can give me any insight into any one account. I find by my invoyces and letters, I consigned you a bulse of diamonds on the *Herne*, Captain Lane, and another on the *Strutham*, Captain Gough, both of which arrived in July before me, and find nothing of either of them in your accounts. There is one that belonged to my Lord Shaftsbury wrote me a very impertinent letter about money hee says hee spent when I stood Knight of the Shire; his name is Parry. I am sure I never ordered him to spend a penny, nor promised ever to give him any, nor will I."

[1] Dropmore I. 59, 60.

Judging from the following letter to Robert from General Stewart, his father was at this time more kindly disposed towards his son than usual; for the General writes:

"1716. September 7. Bath. The account your letter gives of matters is very pleasing to all this family. There seems an appearance of all things going well, and your going to London with Mrs Pitt and the children, will, I believe, improve the good intentions your father may have; especially at this time when, I judge, his final settlements are to bee made. If you do not finde Tom at London, I hope hee will bee sent for to take his leave of his grandfather, soe that hee may see all the infantry together, which I thinke should please him very much."

The infantry must have been an exceptionally interesting group of children. Harriet, the eldest, who was now twelve years old, became according to Lord Camelford "one of the most beautiful women of her time." Thomas, the heir, was eleven. As a young man, his figure is said to have been "one of the most imposing ever seen," and he is said to have been "strong and graceful, addicted to hunting and manly sports." William, the future Earl of Chatham, of whom his grandfather in his correspondence never speaks but in terms of warm affection and appreciation, was now eight years old. The ages of the three youngest girls ranged from ten to two. Catherine, the eldest of the three, is said to "have had much goodness, but neither wit nor beauty." Betty, the youngest, when grown up is reported to have had "the face of an angel and the heart of all the furies[1]." Ann, William's favourite sister, and the nearest in age to him, was in her way almost as notable as he. They were all great favourites with their grandfather. No resentments he may have cherished against their father ever extended to them. It was certainly sound advice which the General gave his son-in-law to bring them all up to London at this juncture that

[1] Rosebery 16, 48, 49, 53.

their grandfather might see as much of them as possible. No less judicious was his conduct in pressing on Robert the desirability of coming up himself to town, and attending to his duties in the household of the Prince of Wales. "I am clearly of opinion," he writes, "that your waiting on the Prince at this time, as much and as often as attendance on your father will permit, is absolutely necessary; which will let him see that you intend constantly to do your duty in your turn, which may be a reasonable inducement to him to think of making that attendance easie to you, since he cannot but know it will create an expense which without his assistance you cannot well afford. I am very glad my house happens to bee empty at this time, that he may see, whenever it is, you shall not bee put to the expence of a lodging."

Meanwhile Robert's lack of business capacity was as usual worrying his father, who on the 29th of September writes:

"I meete with great trouble in settling Sir Stephen Evance's accounts, occasioned by your neglect and ill management, and want the copy of George Pitt's and your receipt which you gave him when you took the diamond out of his hands. I am overwhelmed with trouble, care, and confusion; and wish I was gone, hopeing then to have a little *requiem*, for here I cannot[1]."

A month passed, and neither Robert nor the children had come up to town. On the 7th of September General Stewart had written to his son-in-law from Bath:

"I did fix leaving this the 27th of this month, but since it is absolutely necessary that you should not leave London till your father goes, and that you may have the more time of being at my house, I propose staying here a week longer than I intended."

On the 29th of October he writes from London:

"The Court comes to town this night. I hear the Prince dynes in the Citty next Monday, and that a great many are

[1] Dropmore I. 61.

preparing to make their appearance next Tuesday," (at the birthday levée) "and am told that your velvitt imbrodery will bee ready against that date, but do not hear of any lodgings secured for you to put them on in. The smallpox was never knowne to bee so much in towne as now, therefore...I do not thinke it adviseable to bring the children with you."

Whether Robert came up to town at all at this time seems doubtful. If he did, his stay there cannot have been a long one. For the letter from his father from which the following is an extract is addressed to him at Stratford on the 4th of December.

"From the time I came into England I have bin bewildered in my thoughts about the confusion that was in my family whilst abroad, and whensoe ever I sett about my accounts, it renewed my concerne to that deegree in my closett, and putt mee into such confusion, as made mee desist, whereby my accounts run behindhand: but now I have gott pretty well through them. Yet when I receive any letters from you, write you or thinke of you, it is *renovare dolorem*.......I have been at great expences at home, the great diamond unsold, soe in my 64th year of my age, I am travelling to retrieve this, and seeke my quiett, and endeavoure to forgett it, if I can. God's will bee done. I hope to pass the remainder of my life with more comfort than I have since I came to England[1]."

It is clear that when he wrote this letter the Governor hoped to be able to leave England for Jamaica very shortly, and that he had practically settled up his private affairs. But he was still detained by difficulties which had arisen in defining his powers as Governor and those of his Council and the legislative Assembly of the island[2]. For years past under a succession of Governors, there had been frequent collisions between the Governor and his Council on the one side and the Assembly on the other in relation amongst other matters to the settlement and raising of the Government revenues, the maintenance of the garrison of the island, and the rights of the Assembly to adjourn. His predecessor

[1] Dropmore I. 61. [2] Hedges 3. 150.

Lord Archibald Hamilton during the whole of his term of office had been in constant strife with the Assembly and at last had refused to hold any further communication with them, the result of which had been that he had been removed from office and sent home under arrest as a state prisoner. In these circumstances it is not surprising that his successor should have asked for definite instructions from the Ministry as to the policy which it was desired that he should pursue; and a clear definition of his powers and those of the Council and the Assembly. It was unfortunate that at this juncture the King and Stanhope should have been absent from England in Hanover. They had started from London on the 9th of July, some three weeks after the Governor had kissed hands on his appointment. The Prince of Wales had been left Guardian of the Realm with very limited constitutional powers; and the King did not return until near the end of the following January. In the meanwhile misunderstandings if not intrigues were beginning between Stanhope and Sunderland, who were with the King in Hanover, and Townshend and Walpole, who had remained in London with the Prince, who was himself deeply offended at the King's refusal to appoint him as Regent during his absence. These political troubles and jealousies were already in course of development when Pitt sent in the following petition to the Prince and his ministers[1]:

"To His Royal Highness George, Prince of Wales, The humble Memorial of Thomas Pitt Esqr.

*Sheweth*

That his Majesty having been Graciously pleas'd to Appoint the said Thomas Pitt Governour of the Island of Jamaica in America, he has endeavour'd to gain the best account he is able of the present State and Condition of that Island.

[1] Hedges 3. 151.

And the Right Honble, the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations having favour'd him with the perusal of the several papers transmitted for some time past from thence, by reading the same and also from the information of persons interested in and well acquainted with that Island, the said Governour is inclin'd to believe that the affairs of that Country are in great disorder and confusion.

That the Island is also in a most dangerous State and almost defenceless, as well from the want of a greater number of white people to prevent any Insurrection of the Negroes, as (of) Ships of war to secure the Coasts, Trade and Navigation, and to put an end to the Robberyes and disorder in those parts.

That as the said Governour of Jamaica is preparing to go and take upon him the Government of the said island, he is desireous to discharge his duty in his Post, for His Majesty's Service and the good of the Country, which he shall not be able to doe without Such Instructions and powers as may be thought necessary in the present circumstances of the said Island. On consideration thereof

It is humbly pray'd that before the departure of the said Governour, the present State and Condition of Jamaica may be taken into Consideration, whereby such Dispositions may be made, as on Report thereof may be found most safe and beneficial for the Island and His Majesty's service."

In due course Methuen, who was acting as Secretary of State in Stanhope's absence, referred this petition to the Council of Trade with the following covering letter:

"*From the Secretary of State to the Council of Trade.*

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The inclosed Memorial from Mr Pitt having been laid before His Royal Highness I am commanded to transmit the same to you, and to signify to you His Royal Highnesses Pleasure that you consider what is represented in it, in relation to the present State and Condition of Jamaica, and *report your Opinion of what you shall judge may be most effectual for retrieving the bad condition of that Island.* And as this is a service of Importance I shall be ready to concur with you in your Deliberations on this Head, and to meet you when you shall let me know that it is convenient to you.

I am, my Lords and Gentlemen,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

P. METHUEN."

When sending in his memorial the Governor seems to have not unnaturally assumed that the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, being the Government Department responsible for the administration of the Colonies, would themselves have been aware of the notorious condition of affairs in Jamaica; and that as the result of their accumulated knowledge and experience they had not only formed some definite and pronounced opinions of the reforms that were required; but would also be glad to give him the benefit of their advice, as to the policy which it was desirable that he should adopt. The Secretary of State seems also from his letter to the Council of Trade to have laboured under the same delusion; for he requests them to report their opinion of what they should judge might be most effectual for retrieving the bad conditions of the island. Both he and Pitt had yet apparently to learn the methods of the Government officials of those days, who dealt at home with colonial matters. The main objects of these gentlemen seem to have been to disguise their own incapacity by an affectation of superior wisdom, and whilst securing for themselves a claim to share in the credit of any successes that might be obtained by a competent Colonial Governor, to protect themselves effectually against any discredit that might otherwise attach to them by the failure of an unsuccessful one. In these circumstances it was a matter of great difficulty to obtain any assistance at all from them. In the present case they seem to have had recourse in the first instance to the time honoured expedient of replying to the questions addressed to them by the Governor and Methuen by propounding to Pitt some conundrums of their own; and to have requested him to furnish them with a memorandum, informing them explicitly in what points he desired instructions, and what proposals

he had himself to put forward with respect to each of them.

He lost no time in doing this, and sent in his memorandum on the 16th of October to Methuen, who referred it at once to the Lords Commissioners. The points on which he asked for instructions in it were whether the Assemblies were right in assuming that they had power to adjourn their proceedings whenever they saw fit to do so, and in declaring that the Governor and his Council had no authority to amend Money Bills; whether they were entitled to appoint other persons than the Receiver-General to collect public moneys; what steps the Governor had power to take when the Assembly failed to provide moneys for the subsistence of the garrison, or the payment of other debts of the Government; what encouragement could be given to white people to go and settle in the island; and in what way subscriptions ought to be raised in the island to manage the affairs of the Colony in the United Kingdom. He proposed that the Treasury should be duly supplied with money for the support and honour of the Government, or that a revenue should be settled, equal to the annual charge of the Government which was computed to be £6000 per annum, whilst the settled revenues did not amount to £4000; that the land and houses of the colonists might be extended to the payment of debts; that members of the Council and of the Assemblies should not be allowed protection from suits of law, except in their own persons; that the Government should be empowered to appoint the Clerk and other officers attending the Assemblies; and lastly that ships of war should be sent to Jamaica, and be under the direction of the Governor during their stay in those parts, and that care should be taken that they be relieved by others when recalled.

It can hardly be contended that any of these

proposals were unreasonable, or that the pretensions advanced by the Assemblies did not practically amount to an usurpation of some of the executive powers of the Governor. It would appear, however, from the following extracts from the letter of the Governor to the Lords Commissioners that the officials were not at first prepared to admit that this was the case, and that they had called upon him to give instances in support of his contentions.

"My Lords," he wrote on the 7th of November[1], "By your Lordships commands I received a letter from Mr Popple of the 3 instant, in answer to which I beg leave to say that were I not able to assign Particular instances in a Strict Literal Sence of the Assemblys assuming the Executive part of the Government the whole course of their Proceedings might well justifie that Expression, and whether in particular their Order to muster the Soldiers, and visit Fortifications by their own authority:

Their appointing of officers to collect the money raised by them and making large appointments out of it:

Their refusal to admit the Council to mend money Bills or confer with them:

Their Soliciting Bill, in which the whole busyness of the Government is put into the hands of a few of themselves, to be transacted without the Privity of the Governour and Council:

Their raising money by Subscriptions to Support that Power here, with Extraordinary acts of oppression, which appear upon the minutes:

are not some instances which amount to an assuming in good measure the Executive part of the Government, I submit to your Lordships.

* * * * * * * *

My Lords, as these memorandums were drawn out from the Papers relating to Jamaica, which I was favoured with from your board, and such other information as I obtain'd from Persons I beleiv'd to be the best versed and most knowing in the affairs of that Island, and were not delivered as a Publick Paper, I hope your Lordships will not consider it as such, nor have any other regard to it then as you find it supported by the Papers transmitted to you, it having been my only aim by my memorial to be instructed in such manner as might Enable me to do His Majesty

[1] Hedges 3. 153.

Service by Providing for the Welfare of Jamaica, and not to give a handle to any Person to foment or continue the divisions there. I am with the greatest Esteem, My Lords &ca

THO PITT."

As might have been expected, the Lords Commissioners found great difficulty in making any definite recommendations to the Secretary of State on any of the matters in question. They admitted that it was necessary "from the present circumstances of Jamaica that Mr Pitt should be instructed as his several kinds of matter require"; but they did not venture to commit themselves further than to suggest that "if it should be found necessary to give Mr Pitt instructions on these heads for the better Government and security of the Island, a Letter from his Majestie to the Governor to be communicated to the Council and Assembly on the present Circumstances of Jamaica, recommending more especially the providing for the Soldiers, paying the Publick debts, settling the necessary revenues and Encouraging the Resort and Settlement of White people in the Countrey, might perhaps very much conduce to Exacting or Enforcing whatever Instructions Mr Pitt might receive therein." But with due official caution they carefully abstained from putting on record any definite opinion of their own as to the desirability of giving the Governor the powers he had asked for; and with the object of showing the great care and consideration which they had devoted to the subject, they forwarded to the Secretary of State a vast collection of copies of the correspondence and papers in their office relating to Jamaica and its government, leaving him to form his own conclusions as to what it would be best to do. The letter which accompanied this mass of undigested documents is a typical example of the non-committal official methods of that generation. It ran as follows:

"Sr,

Mr Pitt, appointed by his Majestie Governor of Jamaica, having desired to be instructed upon several heads, whereof he delivered some Memorandums to you, we Immediately took the same into consideration, and finding that the matters therein relate principally to the Powers and Privileges of Assemblies, we thought it necessary to look back into our Books, as far as the first settlement of Assemblies in that Island, for such precedents as were to be found upon these several heads in the Minutes of the Councils, Journals of Assembly and other Papers received from thence.

As this search into the several Books and papers relating to the Government of Jamaica has required much time and application, So it has necessarily occasion'd the Enclosed Extracts to be so voluminous, for we have rather chosen to swell this collection to an unusual length than to omitt the least transaction that might give light to the points that have been laid before us.

We do not presume to give an opinion of our own upon matters which so nearly concern the Prerogative of the Crown, and are so Essential to the Constitution and Government of that Island, Humbly conceiving they may concern his Majestie's more immediate consideration.

We think it proper to acquaint you, on this occasion, that disputes of the like nature have lately arisen in other of his Majestie's Governments in America[1]."

This letter is dated the 16th of December 1716, some six months after Pitt had kissed hands on his appointment. Whatever his own views on the many questions raised for his consideration may have been, Methuen had no alternative but to await the return of the King and his ministers from Hanover, before coming to any decision of his own upon them. The King did not reach London until late in January; and on his arrival found far more urgent and important business awaiting him than the settlement of the government of Jamaica. Another conspiracy of the Jacobites had been brought to light, and was disclosed to the Cabinet Council by Stanhope on the 29th of January.

[1] Hedges 3. 154.

The redoubtable warrior, Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, had, it appears, entered into negotiations with the Pretender and was making arrangements for the invasion of Scotland with an army of 12,000 Swedes. Stanhope was at once authorised by the Cabinet to take the unprecedented step of arresting the Swedish Ambassador, Count Gyllenborg, and of seizing his papers, which on examination left no doubt of the projected invasion. Nor was this all. The very difficult task had to be taken in hand of attempting to bring about a reconciliation between the King and his son, and between the home-staying members of the Ministry and Stanhope and Sunderland, who had accompanied the King to Hanover, and the latter of whom was strongly suspected of intriguing against Townshend and Walpole. With much persuasion Townshend was at last induced to accept for a while the Lord Lieutenancy in Ireland, vacated by Sunderland, and Walpole and his adherents consented to remain in office. The relations, however, of the two parties in the Cabinet continued to be so strained that on the 9th of April the King found it necessary to dispense with Townshend's services, a step which was at once followed by the resignations of Walpole, Methuen, Pulteney, Orford and the Duke of Devonshire. A new Ministry was then formed, in which Stanhope became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sunderland Secretary of State with Addison for his colleague. These changes we may be sure did not weaken the position of Governor Pitt with the Ministry, had he still been inclined to press his application for extended powers as Governor of Jamaica. It would seem however that he did not care to do so. For he resigned his Governorship; and on the 21st of June, Mr Nicholas Lawes, a planter of Jamaica, was appointed as his successor.

There appears to be no record in his correspondence of the motives which induced him to resign the Governorship. There are, however, many reasons, which may have weighed with him and with Stanhope, and helped to bring about his resignation. The appointment of one of their own people to the post was likely to be more acceptable to the colonists than the advent of so masterful a Governor as Pitt would probably have been. Jamaica was in those days the centre of the English slave trade in the West Indies, and the planters who made it their chief business were many of them descendants of the buccaneers, very rough customers to deal with, with strong wills of their own, impatient of control. They had for generations been compelled by the nature of their calling to cope not only with insurrections of their own slaves, but also with periodical incursions of the maroons and runaway negroes who inhabited the interior of the island. Any Governor from England, who ventured to take in hand the onerous task of reducing them to subjection, would have required substantial support in the shape of troops and ships of war, which at that time the Home Government, threatened as they were with a Swedish invasion of Scotland in support of the Jacobite cause, could ill afford to spare for the purpose. It is clear from his memorandum that Pitt was fully aware of the difficulties of the situation; and his experiences in India must have made him alive to the necessity of a strong support from home. Had he gone out, he would certainly not have been willing to accept the position of a mere nominal Governor, content to draw his salary and submit to the dictation of those over whom he was supposed to rule.

It is not unlikely that he acquiesced in, indeed it is quite possible that he may have himself suggested, the policy adopted by his son-in-law's Ministry in

this case. As a practical man, he must have recognised that if the Government had not the means of coercing the colonists the best course to take was to avoid a conflict with them and fall in with their wishes for the time, giving them a chance of shifting for themselves. If they could succeed in holding their own, there was no urgent call for the Home Government to interfere. If they required material assistance from England, they would be more inclined to curtail their pretensions, when they had found by experience that they could not do without it. Apart from these general considerations, he had, as will be seen, personal reasons of his own, which would have made it very inconvenient for him to leave England at this crisis. For early in the year 1717 negotiations had been opened with him, which led to the sale of his famous diamond.

## CHAPTER XXX

### THE SALE OF THE GREAT DIAMOND

FIFTEEN years had passed since Governor Pitt had bought his great diamond at Fort St George for 48,000 pagodas. In the interval one would think he must often have repented of his bargain; and by this time he may have begun to entertain serious doubts whether after all he should ever be able to dispose of his burdensome and unproductive treasure. It has been suggested by some of his detractors that in this venture he had transgressed the rules of the East India Company; but it has been shown that this was not the case. Others have assumed that if he was justified in buying it at all, the purchase should have been made on behalf of the Company, and that any profit which might accrue from its sale should have gone to them and not to him. But he would most assuredly have been taken roundly to task by his enemies on the Court of the Company, if he had ventured to apply any of the Company's funds to the acquisition of so risky and unmarketable a commodity, particularly in view of the letter he had received from Sir Stephen Evans strongly advising him not to meddle with it, not only because of the dangers in the way of getting it safely to England, but also because there was no prince in Europe who could afford to buy such a stone. Models of it in crystal had been sent to the Kings of France, Spain and Prussia, not to mention other foreign potentates. It had been exhibited by its owner to the King and

the Prince of Wales, both of whom had admired, but neither of whom had shown any inclination to buy it. Hopes had been expressed at one time that the City would acquire it as a birthday present to Queen Anne, and at another that the Government would secure it for the Crown of England. But these hopes had all come to nothing: and as time went on the Governor might well wonder what on earth he was to do with it, and what, if he failed to get rid of it during his lifetime, was likely to become of it when he was gone. It must therefore have been a great relief to him when some time in the earlier part of the year 1717, overtures for its purchase were made on behalf of the French Government. How much he asked for it in the first instance is not recorded. But it is clear that it was considerably more than he succeeded in getting. Ultimately the French Government agreed to the following terms:

"£40,000 to be deposited by them in London in part payment for the diamond in the event of their deciding to buy it;

"The stone to be brought to Calais by its owner and there delivered to and inspected by the Court Jeweller, Rondet. In the event of its not being approved by him and purchased, £5000 of the deposit of £40,000 to be paid to the Governor for his expenses and risk;

"In the event of its being approved by Rondet, it was to be purchased by the Regent for the French King at the price of 2,000,000 livres (£125,000), the Governor receiving in addition to the £40,000 deposited in London, French Crown Jewels as security for the payment of the balance of the purchase money."

The Governor's grandson, the second Earl Stanhope, thought there were to be three boxes of these jewels and that the payment of the balance of the purchase money was agreed to be made at three

[1] Hedges 3. 139.

several times fixed upon by the parties. But the Governor himself writing to his son Robert from Pall Mall shortly after the sale on the 29th of June 1717, says, "The stone was sold for 2,000,000 livres (sixteen to one pound sterling). I received the third of the money; and the remainder is in four payments, every six months, with 5 per cent interest: for security of which I have Crown jewells, 4 parcells, one to be delivered at each payment[1]."

In pursuance of the agreement thus arrived at, the Governor made his arrangements for carrying out his part of the compact, and determining not to let the stone go out of his possession but to deliver it in person to the French Court Jeweller, started from London for the purpose, in company with his son-in-law Charles Cholmondeley and his two soldier sons, Thomas the colonel of Dragoons, who in after years became Lord Londonderry, and John, who was now a captain in the Guards. On the way to Calais, they stopped at Canterbury, where the regiment of his son Thomas was quartered, and where an incident occurred, which is thus related in an extract from the *European Magazine*, given by Sir Henry Yule in his *Documentary Contributions to a Biography of Governor Pitt*.

"Gov. Pitt having engaged to deliver his diamond at Calais...in his way dining at the Crown Inn at Canterbury, called up the landlord, Mr Lacy, a man of address, who had been consul at Lisbon, and told him that when he travelled he always carried his own wine, not being able to meet with such on the road, and desired him to taste it and give his opinion. Lacy did so and gave it due commendation wishing politely that he could have treated his guest with as good. Upon this Mr Pitt made him repeat his draught, and at length was so pleased with his

[1] Dropmore 1. 62. [2] Hedges 3. 139.

frankness as to tell him that he liked him much, and wished it was in his power to serve him. To this the landlord innocently replied that he (Pitt) had a pebble in his possession, which might indeed do him the utmost service. At this the Governor, thinking that the secret of his having it with him was betrayed and known, flew into a violent rage, abusing poor Lacy in the grossest terms (so that he ran frightened out of the room) and saying he should be waylaid, murdered &c. In vain did his son and the officers endeavour to pacify him, telling him that if he himself did not make the discovery no one would know it. He insisted on having a guard mounted directly; Lord Londonderry told him there was one already with the standard. He then would have a guard to Dover; and at length as a compromise, accepted of the escort of the officers and their servants, giving them a second dinner there. Two of them he took with him to Calais (one of whom gave the above account); and after getting rid of the encumbrance of his pebble, *en gaieté du cœur*, he franked his companions to Paris and back again."

At Calais, the only difficulty that remained to be surmounted seems to have been to convince the Court Jeweller of the quality of the water of the diamond. This, according to a tradition in the Pitt family, was got over by the Governor's son Thomas, who "putting a bank note into Rondet's hands, bade him go to the window to see it in a better light. It was then decided to be in all respects perfect[1]."

That the purchasers were satisfied with their bargain is clear from a passage in the *Memoirs* of St Simon, quoted by Sir Henry Yule, from which it would appear that the proposal to the Regent to buy it emanated from no less a personage than John Law, the originator of the famous Mississippi Scheme.

[1] Rosebery 4

"Law," says St Simon[1] "who on many occasions had large ideas, came in search of me in a state of excitement, bringing the model to show me. I thought, like him, that it was not becoming the greatness of the King of France to refuse, on account of its price, a gem like this, unique in all the world and past valuation, and that the more in number the potentates were who had been debarred from thinking of it, the less we should be disposed to let such an acquisition slip us. Law, delighted to find I had such ideas, begged me to speak to the Duke of Orleans on the subject. The state of the finances constituted an obstacle, on which the Regent dwelt with insistence. He feared the blame that would attach to him for making so considerable a purchase at a time when there was so much effort required to meet the most pressing demands, and when so many people were of necessity abandoned to privation. I said these sentiments did him credit ; but at the same time that when the greatest King in Europe was in question, we ought not to act as in the case of a private individual. In such an one it would doubtless be highly censurable were he to throw away 100,000 francs to treat himself to a fine diamond, when his debts were heavy and he was unable to meet them. But now the honour of the Crown had to be thought of, and this one chance of acquiring a diamond of priceless value, one which eclipsed all existing in Europe, should not be allowed to escape. It would be a perpetual glory for his regency, and whatever might be our financial straits, the parsimony of such a refusal would not do much to help them, whilst the additional charge involved in the purchase would make little perceptible difference. In short I did not leave the Duke of Orleans, till I had obtained his assent to the diamond's being bought. Law, before speaking to

[1] Hedges 3. 140.

me, had represented in such strong terms to the dealer the impossibility of effecting a sale of the diamond at the price demanded, as well as the pity it would be to cut it up and the loss which he would suffer by such a proceeding, that he brought him down at last to 2,000,000 including the chips that would come off in cutting. The bargain was struck on those terms, and interest was to be paid on the two millions until the principal should be made good, and meanwhile two millions worth of jewels were to be pledged to him until the whole payment of the two millions was completed.

"The Duke of Orleans was agreeably disappointed by the expression of public applause bestowed on such a splendid and unique acquisition. The diamond got the name of the Regent. It is of the size of a *Reine Claude* plum, nearly circular in form, and of a depth proportionate to its magnitude. It is perfectly colourless and exempt from every kind of speck, shade or flaw, of an admirable water and weighs more than 500 grains. I take great credit to myself for having counselled the Regent to make such a memorable purchase."

This statement was not written until thirty years after the purchase of the diamond, which may account for two small inaccuracies in it, one conveying the impression that there were still chips to come off the diamond, and the other ignoring the fact that £40,000 of the purchase money had been deposited in cash in London to be handed over to the Governor as part payment of the purchase money and that the jewels were only to be held by him as security for the unpaid balance.

We shall probably not be far wrong in assuming that the Governor, who was a good judge of the quality of gems ("I have been very seldom mistaken[1],"

[1] Dropmore I. 40.

he had written of himself to his son Robert some years before, "when I trust to my own eyes as to the water") scrutinised these boxes of state jewels very carefully at Calais before parting with his diamond. It was well that he should do so. For, so far as can be gathered from such records as have survived, the balance of the purchase money was never paid; and they were therefore the only realisable assets which he secured to make it good. It may be doubted whether he lost much by taking them over. At the worst they must have been more saleable than the great diamond would have been, if it had remained on his hands.

Its subsequent history after he had parted with it was an eventful one. It occupied a prominent position in the circlet of the crown made by Rondet[1] for the coronation of Louis the Fifteenth in 1722. In 1791, it was ordered by the National Assembly to be sold with the other state jewels of that day, figuring in the inventory as "un superbe diamant brillant, blanc, appelé le régent, forme carrée, les coins arrondis, ayant une petite glace dans les filets et une autre dans le dessous, pesant 136 carats $\frac{13}{16}$, (environ 29 gr. 617) estimé 12 millions de livres," (six times the price given for it). It was placed on view to the public in the Garde Meuble, whence it was promptly stolen, Madame Roland and her husband ascribing the theft to Danton and his secretary, who retaliated by denouncing them as the culprits, whilst Lullier, the Public Prosecutor, accused the poor Queen of being at the bottom of the business. Twelve months elapsed before it was recovered by the police, most fortunately intact, concealed in a hole in the woodwork of a garret in a cabaret of the Faubourg St Germain. On the coronation of the Emperor Napoleon in 1804 it was set in the pommel of his Sword

[1] Hedges 3. 142.

of State. On his deposition ten years later, it was carried off by Marie Louise, but restored to Louis the Eighteenth, who took it with him in his flight from Paris in the following year; and brought it back again on his second restoration. Its wanderings then ended, and it has remained ever since in the possession of the French Government.

How far the prospect of its sale to the Regent induced the Governor to resign the Governorship of Jamaica has been disputed. His successor was appointed, as has been seen, on the 21st of June 1717. Pitt was himself back in London after effecting the sale some time before the 29th of June in that year, as appears from his letter to Robert already referred to in which he informs his son of the terms on which the stone had been sold. It would seem from this letter that Robert having heard some rumours of the price obtained for it, had told his father of them, for the Governor whilst giving him the details, writes, "I cannot help impertinent fools medleing with my busyness that they had nothing to do with." It is also clear from this letter that he was already making arrangements for the application of the proceeds of the sale, for he says in it, "When I can get matters settled about that Cornish estate" (Boconnoc) "I think it would not be amiss if you went down with Cressick. If that of my Lord Lexington's be for sale, I should be willing to be the purchaser, because it lies under one's eyes."

Von Ruville gives the following reasons for believing that the Governor's sale of the diamond had no bearing whatever on his resignation of the Governorship of Jamaica: "When a Governor demands," he says, "full powers and is kept waiting for the result of a legal search avowedly tedious, such action can

[1] Von Ruville's *Life of Chatham*, I. 42.

only be interpreted as a polite refusal of his services. We need not be surprised that Thomas does not refer in his letters to this unpleasant business, which must have caused him considerable annoyance." And he goes on to say, "In Salomon's *Pitt* a motive for the withdrawal of Thomas is to be found in the sale of the diamond, which relieved him from the necessity of undertaking the duties of an arduous post in his old age. A comparison of the dates will show the impossibility of this explanation. The new Governor was appointed on June 21, 1717, while the sale of the diamond was not concluded until June 29. It is impossible to suppose that Thomas was so careless of the future as to refuse a new source of income long before the conclusion of the sale; his decision must have been taken at a much earlier date, for the appointment of a new Governor cannot have followed immediately upon the resignation of Thomas; weeks and months were usually occupied in making such appointments."

It is, however, clear from the Governor's letter to Robert of the 29th of June that the sale of the diamond had been completed before that date, how long before is uncertain. That the negotiations for the sale had been for some time in progress may be inferred from the passage in St Simon's *Memoirs*, in which reference is made to the arguments brought to bear on the Governor to induce him to reduce his original demands. Before Pitt had sailed for Calais with the diamond, £40,000 had been deposited as security in London, of which he was to receive £5000 in the event of the purchase falling through. There seems no good reason to assume with Von Ruville that the Ministry, of which his son-in-law Stanhope was now at the head, politely refused Pitt's services; that their action caused him considerable annoyance. It is very unlikely that he could not have retained

the Governorship of Jamaica if he had cared to do so, or that any unpleasantness between him and the Ministry prevented him from taking it up. Even if the sale of the diamond had not been absolutely concluded when he resigned (and it is quite possible that it had been), the near prospect of its completion, and the desirability of his remaining in England to dispose of the purchase money may very well have influenced him in his decision to resign. He undoubtedly did apply a considerable part of the proceeds of the sale to the purchase of the Cornish estate to which he refers in the above letter to Robert; from the wording of which it seems clear that he was already in treaty for the acquisition of Boconnoc, the most important of the many properties bought by him. Its vendor was the widow of the quarrelsome Lord Mohun, who had been killed some years before in the famous duel with his brother-in-law the Duke of Hamilton, which is thus described in Swift's *Journal to Stella* of the 15th of November 1712. "Before this comes to your hands, you will have heard of the most terrible accident that has almost ever happened. This morning at eight, my man brought me word that duke Hamilton had fought with lord Mohun, and killed him, and was brought home wounded. I immediately sent him to the duke's house in St James's Square; but the porter could hardly answer for tears, and a great rabble was about the house. In short they fought at seven this morning; the dog Mohun was killed on the spot; and while the duke was over him, Mohun shortened his sword, stabbed him in at the shoulder to the heart. The duke was helped towards the cake house by the ring in Hyde Park (where they fought) and died on the grass, before he could reach the house; and was brought home in his coach by eight while the poor duchess was asleep. Macartney and one Hamilton

were the seconds, who fought likewise and are both fled. I am told that a footman of lord Mohun's stabbed duke Hamilton and some say Macartney did so too. Mohun gave the affront, and yet sent the challenge. I am indefinitely concerned for the poor duke who was a frank, honest, good natured man. He had the greatest mind in the world to have me go with him to France but durst not tell it me; and those he did tell said I could not be spared, which was true. They have removed the poor duchess to a lodging in the neighbourhood, where I have been with her for two hours, and am just come away. I never saw so melancholy a scene, for indeed all reasons for real grief belong to her; nor is it possible for anybody to be a greater loser in all regards. She has moved my very soul. The lodging was inconvenient, and they would have removed her to another: but I would not suffer it, because it had no room backward, and she must have been tortured with the noise of the Grub Street screamers mentioning her husband's murder in her ears."

It may be a shock to some of the lovers of *Esmond* to find from this very circumstantial account that the Duke of Hamilton, so far from being a widower and engaged to marry Beatrix Esmond at the time of his death had a wife of his own, of whom Swift thus writes on the following day in his *Journal*: "I have been with her two hours again, and find her worse. Her violences not so frequent, but her melancholy more formal and settled. She has abundance of wit and spirit, about thirty-three years old" (Beatrix, it will be remembered, was twenty-six and owned to twenty-five), "handsome and airy and seldom spared anybody that gave her the least provocation; by which she has many enemies and few friends." It was from this unfortunate lady's sister that Governor Pitt bought Boconnoc and the other properties

of the Mohuns in Cornwall for £53,000 and "was held to have got a bargain[1]." This however does not seem to have been his own opinion[2]. For he writes to Robert in 1723: "I have often repented that I meddled with that estate, and wish that those who come after me don't so too." He had great difficulty in getting the rents paid regularly, which he attributed to the defaults of his steward Phillips. On the 22nd of November 1722 he writes: "Nor have I for above a twelvemonth received one penny from my estate in Cornwall, from which I should have received three or four thousand pounds, which so perplexes my thoughts that I am thinking of selling all my estates there and putt Phillips into those hands that shall tare him in pieces and call him to an account of all his villanys[3]."

Whilst the negotiations for the purchase of this estate were still in progress, they came, as was to be expected, to the knowledge of Lady Grandison, who wrote to her daughter in London on the 9th of July: "This will be a very proper time for my son Pitt to visit the Governor in London, as he will find only Colonel Pitt in the house: Lady Frances" (his second son's wife) "Mr. Cholmondeley and family having departed for Cheshire yesterday. It is very expedient that the Governor should be kept in the good humour of thinking of buying an estate, which I cannot believe but must be designed for the head of the family[4]." Lady Grandison was probably not far wrong in thinking that Boconnoc was designed for Robert and his descendants. The Governor has himself left on record his desire to found a county family, and Boconnoc was left by him some years later to Robert and his heirs. He would no doubt for many reasons have preferred that the family seat

[1] Rosebery 6.
[2] Dropmore I. 71.
[3] Dropmore I. 68.
[4] Dropmore I. 62.

should be in his own native county of Dorset; and with that end in view had bought two manors there, Blandford St Mary and Kynaston, besides other lands in the county. He would probably have had his principal estate there if he could have got a suitable one on reasonable terms. Failing Dorset, he could hardly have found a more eligible county in which to plant his family than Cornwall, which possessed what in his eyes must have been the great attraction of the abnormally large representation of 42 members in the House of Commons[1]. Boconnoc had been in the Mohun family since 1589. Davies Gilbert says of it in his *Parochial History of Cornwall*[2]: "It is universally allowed to be the finest seat in Cornwall. The house stands on an elevation near the summit of two valleys each rendered beautiful and picturesque by streams of water flowing through uneven ground, and by native woods of beech and oak, rivalling the trees of our most favoured inland counties, although these valleys originate in wild tracts of land where not a stunted shrub is seen." Modern tourists will bear testimony to the accuracy of this description. Boconnoc House had been the headquarters of Charles the First in the stage of the Civil War that ended in the surrender of the army of the Earl of Essex at Fowey. It had been built by the Mohuns, but was now remodelled by Governor Pitt, who added a wing to the old structure[3]. In after years it was enlarged by the first Lord Camelford, who added another wing to it. It is situate four miles east from Lostwithiel and eight from Liskeard. Its main drawback in the Governor's day must have been its inaccessibility from London, which not only made it difficult for him personally to supervise the management of the estate but seems also to have

[1] Hedges 3. 148.
[2] Vol. 1. 73.
[3] Lysons' *Magna Britannica*, 3. 18.

made his famous grandson, William, when staying there for a while, presumably for purposes of economy, after leaving college, disrespectfully refer to it as "this cursed hiding place." That Robert was taken into his father's confidence in its purchase is clear not only from the letter above referred to, in which it is suggested that he should go down with Cressick to see the place, but also from another letter written to him from Pall Mall in the August of the following year, in which the Governor says: "I shall be satisfied to have the papers of Lady Mohun's estate on my return from Cheshire. I thought my cousin Pitt's life had been filled up long since. This should be done at once. Mr. Lyttcott, as I remember, added a life for £200. If you can, when you are adding the life let the other two be changed, and put in the three brothers Robert, Thomas and John, and my name as purchaser[1]." It would appear from this letter that when it was written the formalities of the purchase had not been completed, but were approaching completion.

The two lives for which Robert's brothers were proposed by this letter to be substituted were those of Robert's two sons, Thomas and William. Robert seems to have objected to this proposal; for on the 18th of August his father writes: "I mentioned your brothers' lives for nothing but that I thought them better than two soe little boys as yours are. Tommy's may stand, but Will has not had the small pox. Let itt be purchased in my name, and fill them up with what lives you will." It would seem from this letter that the Governor had already purchased his Swallowfield estate; for he adds: "I went on Thursday to Swallowfield. Colonel Otway and Mr. James were with me. We ordered many alterations, which will, I fear, put me to vast expense. I wish I had a better

[1] Dropmore I. 62.

head than Abbiss[1] there. The house has been made much cheerfuller by the cutting down of trees."

Swallowfield had one great advantage from the Governor's point of view as a country residence. It was readily accessible from London, being six miles south-east of Reading. Lysons says that Pitt bought it in 1719[2]; but from the above letter it would seem that he was already in possession of it in 1718. One of its attractions may have been its garden and grounds, which must have given the Governor ample scope for the indulgence of his favourite hobby. Thirty-three years before it had been thus enthusiastically described in *Evelyn's Diary*: "October 22nd. 1685. I accompanied My Lady Clarendon to her house at Swallowfield in Berks, dining by the way at Bagshot, the house new repair'd and capacious enough for a good family, lies in a park. Hence we went to Swallowfield; this house is after the antient building of honourable gentlemen's houses, where they kept up antient hospitality, but the gardens and waters as elegant as 'tis possible to make a flat, by art and industrie, and no meane expense, my lady being so extraordinarily skill'd in ye flowery part, and my lord in diligence of planting; so that I have hardly seen a seate which shows more token of it than what is to be found here, not only in the delicious and rarest fruits of a garden, but in those innumerable timber trees in the grounds about the seate, to the greatest ornament and benefit of the place. There is one orchard of 1000 golden and other cider pippins; walks and groves of elms, limes and oaks and other trees. The garden is so beset with all manner of sweete shrubbs, that it perfumes the aire. The distribution also of the quarters, walks and parterres,

[1] His old servant whom he remembered in his will.
[2] Lysons' *Magna Britannica*, 3. 384. Rosebery 5.

is excellent. The nurseries, kitchen garden full of the most desireable plants; two very noble orangeries well furnished; but above all the canall and fishponds, the one fed with a white, the other with a black running water, fed by a quiet and swift river, so well and plentifully stock'd with fish, that for pike, carp breame and tench, I never saw anything approaching it. We had at every meale carp and pike of a size fit for the table of a Prince and what added to ye delight, was to see the hundreds taken by the drag, out of which the cooke standing by, we pointed out which we had most mind to, and had carp that would have been worth at London twenty shillings a piece. The waters are flagg'd about with *Calumus aromaticus*, with wch my lady has hung about a closet, that retains the smell very perfectly. There is also a certaine sweete willow and other exotics; also a very fine bowling greene, meadow, pasture and wood; in a word all that can render a country seat delightful. There is besides a well furnish'd library in the house. 26th. We returned to London, having been treated with all sorts of cheere and noble freedom by that most religious and vertuous lady." Evelyn revisited Swallowfield on several subsequent occasions; and Lord Clarendon in a letter to him speaks of the garden there "as one of your best and dearest children[1]," from which it has not unreasonably been inferred that he had himself suggested improvements that had been made in it.

The Lady Clarendon referred to in the above description was the widow and heiress of the former owner of Swallowfield, after whose death she had married Henry, Earl of Clarendon, the son of the Lord Chancellor and historian, whose great work, *The History of the Rebellion*, Governor Pitt seems to have greatly admired, for writing to his old friend

[1] *Swallowfield and its Owners*, p. 153.

Raworth from India in 1707, he says: "Your Sone has received the box of books, and I have read part of My Lord Clarendon's works, which are very diverting, being as I beleive nothing but the truth; which I hope will divert our age from falling into the like misfortunes from their intestine divisions[1]." In 1689 the house at Swallowfield had been enlarged and rebuilt by Lord Clarendon[2], who employed for the purpose the eminent architect William Talman, now best remembered by the extensive alterations and improvements, made by him for King William the Third at Hampton Court and the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth. That Pitt carried out considerable further improvements there appears from Lord Camelford's statement[3] that he contrived to throw away as much money there as would have enabled him to build himself a family residence at Blandford. Amongst other things, he built the bridge over the Blackwater in the Park, the centre arch of which bears his initials, "T. P. 1722[4]."

Swallowfield seems to have been the Governor's favourite country residence in his old age. That he not only employed his leisure there in looking after his garden and grounds and fish-ponds, but also derived pleasure from reading what he terms "books of esteem," may perhaps be inferred from the fact that in his last extant letter, written a few days before his death, he asks his son to send him there the Duke of Buckingham's works, which had recently been published, edited by Pope.

It was not apparently until some time after the completion of the purchases of these two delightful estates that the Governor received any intimation that the trustees of Sir Stephen Evans had a claim against him for commission on the sale of the great

[1] Hedges 3. 112.
[2] *Swallowfield and its Owners*, p. 169.
[3] Rosebery 5.
[4] *Swallowfield and its Owners*, p. 213.

diamond in which they had taken no part. When settling up his private affairs and accounts at the end of 1716, he had, as has been seen, been unable to find a copy of the receipt which Robert had given to Evans on taking the diamond from his custody. He had accordingly written to Robert for it, but had apparently failed to obtain it. He seems to have been kept in the dark by his son as to the arrangements made with Evans. He was now rudely enlightened on the subject by the filing of a Bill in Chancery by the trustees of Evans, as appears from the following letter, written by him to Robert:

"1719 October 3. Pall Mall. Mr. Stacy sent me a letter to appoint him where he should wait on me...to fix an answer to Sir Caesar Child and Company their bill in Chancery in regard to Sir Stephen Evance about the great diamond, on which it is absolutely necessary that you come to town; and it would not be amiss to call on George Pitt to discourse him about what induced you to take it out of Sir Stephen's hands. I remember that you gave sufficient reasons for it, which I cannot call to mind: what induced you to give that note and many other things. We must now answer fully the bill, and I doubt not with your help and George Pitt's we shall put a stop to their hellish and unjust demand[1]."

In reply he received the following very unsatisfactory letter from Robert:

"1719. October 5. Stratford. I have not been one day well since I left you. In this condition I am very unfit to undertake a journey, but all the ends of my coming to town may be answered without it.

What I have to say as to the affair you mention is no more than this: that having had divers intimations that Sir Stephen Evance was in suspicious circumstances, I thought it absolutely necessary to remove the diamond from his custody, which he scrupled to comply with unless he could be assured of receiving East India commission which is 5 per cent: whereupon I gave him my note to satisfy him on that point, which in case of your mortality, if the property of the diamond descended to me, would oblige me to the payment of it. I was so anxious to

[1] Dropmore I. 63.

preserve so great a concern, which I thought would be irrecoverably lost if it remained in his hands, that if he had demanded anything further of me, I should have consented to it. All this may be taken before any Commissioner of Chancery in the country as well as before a Master in London, and with half the charge. I will write to my cousin Pitt to recollect himself upon this matter, he having been present at the whole transaction, and from that hour had the custody of the diamond till your return."

The Chancery suit does not seem to have progressed very rapidly. In August of the following year the Governor writes from Boconnoc to Robert:

"I have received a letter from Cozen Chapple about Sir Stephen Evance's trustees, who demand commission on the great diamond, and a Master in Chancery tells them I am obliged to answer what it was sold for, which I think is not only unreasonable but unjust to the last degree: and many inconveniences, as I may tell you hereafter, may attend it if I am obliged so to do. Therefore pray do you and cozen Chapple sett together and draw out the plaine state of the case, and go with it to two or three of the best practices in Chancery, and leave it with them for their opinion in writing and retaine them for me if it comes to be argued before my Lord Chancellor, for I think the Master that gave his opinion in it is neither indued with reason, law nor justice[1]."

There can be little doubt that the Governor had ultimately to pay the commission, much to his disgust. If so, what with this payment, the law costs relating to it, the failure of the French Government to pay the balance of the purchase money, the risks he had run and the long time that he had had the diamond on his hands, he cannot be said to have made an inordinate profit out of his great concern.

[1] Dropmore I. 65.

# CHAPTER XXXI

## DECLINING YEARS AND DEATH

WHILST Governor Pitt had been occupied in the negotiations for the sale of his great diamond, and the purchasing of Boconnoc and Swallowfield, his son-in-law, the Earl of Stanhope, had been conducting the administration of the foreign affairs of the country with such conspicuous ability and success that all dangers to the House of Hanover that might otherwise have arisen from the organised assistance which the Jacobites had endeavoured to obtain from the Governments of France, Spain and Sweden, had for the time been completely removed. Stanhope had indeed come to such an entente cordiale with France that an edict had been issued by the French Government, banishing from that country all adherents of the Pretender. The King of Spain had been induced to get rid of his Prime Minister Alberoni, the bitter enemy of England; to evacuate Sicily and Sardinia; to renounce all pretensions to the French Crown; and ultimately even to join the Quadruple Alliance. By these arrangements the peace of Europe had been effectually secured for some years to come. So strong was the position which Stanhope had won for himself with the King and the country, that Walpole and Townshend had agreed in the spring of 1720 to join his administration as subordinates, the former without a seat in the Cabinet. This happy condition of affairs had brought about a reconciliation between

the King and the Prince of Wales, who found himself by the concord of the conflicting statesmen deprived of the support of any malcontents of importance in his quarrel with his father. The Royal reconciliation is thus announced in a letter from the Governor to his son Robert[1]:

"1720. April 23. This to acquaint you with the great and good news of this day, which is a reconciliation between the King and Prince. The King sent for the Prince, who, after some time with him, came out with drums, trumpetts and collours displayed, the usuall ceremonies to the Prince of Wales, and Guards attended him home; and tomorrow it is expected that the Court of St. James's and that of Lester Fields unite in one, to the great joy of all that love old England."

The Governor's wife, Mrs Jane Pitt, took this opportunity of trying to persuade Robert to follow the admirable example set by Royalty and the rival politicians by bringing to an end his dissensions with his brother Thomas, who had now married Lady Frances Ridgeway, the daughter and co-heir of the late Earl of Londonderry, and had himself been created Baron Londonderry in 1719. With this object she wrote the following letter to Robert:

"1720. May 7. Gravill Pitt. What you write about your son Willy" (the future Earl of Chatham) "I hope will be brought to pass, if you can prevale on your uncle Villers to have a little patience. When my son Londonderry returns, I dare answer for him that he will indever to promote the affaire, who has allways promoted the interest of your children and is very ready to do it again upon all occasions, and indeed so are his sisters. I am extreme sorry that my son Pitt did not invite him to his house, for he intended to have come, if he had been invited, and nobody could expect him without it, especially when he never did any thing that in reason could cause his brother's anger and is very ready to forgit any thing that his brother has said or done against him. But who can desire him that has received all injurys to make all the advances. But if my son Pitt wod be so wise as to follow the good example of his Master, the Prince and his followers, who was all so forward in being reconsiled to their

[1] Dropmore I. 64.

old friends, that they never rested till they had kissed and imbraced them all, and the very next day made invitations to the Ministry. The Duke of Devon began, and so it has held on ever since. Nay, the ladies too was so inclined to friendship that they did the same. My Lady Townsend and Mrs. Worpoole came to your sister Stanhope the next day to invite her, so that they which now stands out are petty singular, for the Prince and Princess has returned thanks to your brother Stanhope for the great servisces he has done to the nation and them. So you see when eyes are opened and malitious storys sett in a true light, what vast allterations it maks in opinions, which I pray God give us all grace and humility to consider as we ought."

It would seem from the concluding paragraph of this letter that the poor lady, when she wrote it, had in mind her own sad case, and attributed her repudiation by her husband to the malicious stories which had been spread abroad some fourteen years before of her indiscretions at Bath.

In June of this year, Parliament having risen, the King as usual proceeded to Hanover for the summer, taking Stanhope with him. All seemed well. In his speech in the House of Lords at the close of the session, His Majesty, after referring to the great advantages that had been gained from the measures of his Government "in restoring the tranquillity of Europe and freeing much the greater part of Christendom from the calamities of war[1]," had expressed his "satisfaction at the good foundation which had been prepared for the payment of the National Debts," and his confidence that on his return from Hanover he should find the country "in such a state of tranquillity as would show mankind how firmly his government was established[1]."

The good foundation here referred to was the unfortunate scheme for the liquidation of the National Debt, embodied in the South Sea Act, the responsibility for which had been entrusted by Stanhope, who laid no claim himself to financial knowledge, to

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 650.

Sunderland and Aislabie, the heads of the Treasury, and Craggs the Secretary of State, all of whom were supposed to be great financial authorities, and having been his colleagues for some years, possessed his entire confidence, which in this instance they had shamefully betrayed with disastrous consequences to themselves and to him. The measure had passed both Houses by large majorities and was generally supposed to have placed the national finances on a secure basis, notwithstanding emphatic warnings from prominent members of both Houses, who had tried in vain to convince the Ministry of the injustice which it would inflict on the holders of Government securities, and the fatal encouragement which it would inevitably give "to the fraudulent and pernicious practice of stock jobbing, and the artificial inflation of the price of the stock of the South Sea Company." In the Commons, Walpole, prior to his joining the Ministry, had been supported by Thomas Pitt, Gould, Steele and other members[1], in pressing upon the Ministry the desirability of inserting in the Bill provisions which, if they had been adopted, would have greatly diminished these dangers, and the amendment which they had proposed with this object had only been rejected by the narrow majority of 144 to 140. When the Bill reached the Lords, these warnings were reiterated, and again disregarded. Lord Cowper had not hesitated to denounce the Bill as grossly unjust and dangerous, and to compare it to "the Trojan horse, which was ushered in and received with great pomp and acclamations of joy, but was contrived for treachery and destruction." The Duke of Wharton had pointed out that "the artificial and prodigious rise of the Stock was a dangerous bait, which might decoy many unwary people to their ruin and allure them by a false prospect

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 645—647.

of gain, to part with what they had got by their labour and industry, to purchase imaginary riches." Unfortunately these views were not shared by the public or by the Ministry, who were thought to have done very well for the nation by the bargain they had made with the Company, who were to pay the Government the enormous sum of seven and a half millions for the privilege of taking over the National Debt, amounting at that time to some thirty millions, and the revenues hypothecated for its discharge. The exaction by the Government of this heavy payment, coupled with the rejection of the amendment proposed by Walpole and seconded by Pitt, left the Company one way only by which they could hope to make a profit from the scheme, which was to delude the public into paying so high a price for their stock that it might tempt unwary holders of the Government securities to part with their annuities in return for an inadequate amount of stock. This had practically been admitted by Sunderland, in his speech in the House of Lords in support of the Bill. Prior to the introduction of the Bill, the Company's stock had stood at 150. When the Bill had reached the House of Lords, it had risen to 300. Lord Cowper had pointed out that if it continued at that price, the Company would gain thirty millions, of which they would only have to surrender to the Government one quarter. In reply Lord Sunderland urged that when the bargain with the Company had been made, neither party could possibly have foreseen that the stock would have risen to this extent; and that if, as was not unlikely, it remained at that price, it was but reasonable that the Company should enjoy the profit "procured by the wise management and industry of its directors," in other words, by the unscrupulous methods to which they had resorted to lead the public to believe that they had made an

exceptionally good bargain with the Government. It need hardly be said that after this encouragement from the chief Lord of the Treasury, the Directors did not hesitate to improve on the methods which they had so successfully employed for gulling the public. No sooner had their Act become law than they spread the rumour that "Stanhope had received overtures in France to exchange Gibraltar and Port Mahon for some places in Peru, for the security and enlargement of the English trade in the South Sea[1]." They then proceeded to open their books for a subscription of a million stock at £300 per cent., at the same time declaring a dividend of 10 per cent. payable at midsummer. As the result of this appeal they announced that two millions of stock had been subscribed; opened their books for a further subscription of another million at 400 per cent.; and in due course announced that the subscription for stock at this enhanced price had amounted to a million and a half. Then a large proportion of the holders of the Government annuities, seeing that as the stock rose they were losing the benefit of the rise, and fearing that if it continued to rise they would receive less and less of it ultimately, eagerly parted with their securities for stock which at its par value represented little more than 8½ years' purchase of the annual income which the Government had engaged to pay them. The result of the Company's acquisition of the annuities on these terms sent the stock up at the end of May to 550. In the middle of June it had risen to 750, and by the end of the month to 1000, at which price subscription lists were opened for another four millions, the whole of which was greedily taken up by the infatuated public. Then the inevitable reaction set in: the stock began to fall, and a constantly increasing number of its holders became as

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 652.

anxious to part with their stock as they had been a few weeks before to get hold of it. By the end of July it had fallen to 900, and in August to 800. On the 30th of that month the Directors made a final desperate and unscrupulous bid to regain the confidence of the investing public by passing the infamous resolution "That 30 per cent. in money should be the half year's dividend due at Christmas next, and from thence for twelve years, not less than 50 per cent. in money should be the yearly dividend on their stock[1]."

So far from having the desired effect, this barefaced attempt to impose on the credulity of the public seems to have been regarded by the majority of the speculators as a strong confirmation of the doubts which had for some time past been entertained in many quarters of the honesty of the Directors. On the evening of the day on which the resolution was confirmed by the General Court of the Company (the 8th of September) the stock fell to 640, and on the next day to 550. By the end of the month it had fallen to 300, and thousands who had looked forward to making their fortunes quickly found themselves ruined. Expresses were sent to Hanover pressing for the King's instant return. He hastened home with Stanhope and landed at Margate on the 9th of November. It had been hoped that his coming might help to restore the credit of the Company. Needless to say, it had no such effect. Before Parliament met in December the stock had fallen to 135; and a bitter cry for vengeance against the Directors and officials of the Company had gone up from all classes of the community and from every part of the country. A Parliamentary inquiry into their accounts and proceedings had become inevitable.

In the King's Speech on the 8th of December His Majesty expressed "his concern for the unhappy

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 665.

state of affairs, which had so much affected the public credit," and earnestly recommended both Houses "to consider of the most effectual and speedy methods to restore the National Credit and put it upon a lasting foundation," exhorting them "to remember that all their Prudence, Temper and Resolution were necessary to find out and apply the proper remedies." From the wording of the speech it would appear that the Ministry desired in the first instance to confine the consideration of Parliament to the measures to be taken for restoring the stability of the public credit. This, however, was by no means what the majority of the members of the House of Commons were disposed to do; and in their reply to the Address they assured the King that they would not only do what he had asked them, but would also "find out what measures could be taken for the punishment of the authors of the mischief." These words were inserted in their reply, in consequence of the feeling of the House evinced in a debate on an amendment moved by Mr Shippen, and supported by Sir Joseph Jekyll, Mr Neville and Pitt, in the course of which it became clear that although Craggs, the Secretary of State, and Walpole, who had now joined the Ministry, were opposed to this course, the House generally were determined to find out the offenders and inflict summary punishment on them[1]. Three days later Mr Neville moved that "The Directors of the Company should forthwith lay before the House an Account of their Proceedings." He was seconded by Governor Pitt and Molesworth. This proposal was denounced by Craggs as preposterous, and strongly opposed by Walpole and his brother Horatio, both of whom urged that the House ought to begin by applying remedies and retrieving the situation. On the other hand it was contended

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 683.

with some force that it would be absurd to attempt to cure a distemper without first discovering its nature. After a heated debate, the Ministry agreed to the motion without a division. The only record outside the *Parliamentary History* which has apparently survived of the Governor's speech on this occasion is contained in a letter written at the time by Mr Brodrick to Lord Middleton. "Governor Pitt, he says, "moved that the Directors should attend on Thursday with their Myrmidons, the secretary, the treasurer, and if they pleased, with their great *Scanderbeg*; who he meant by that I know not, but the epithet denotes somebody of consideration." That grave suspicions were already rife as to the complicity of certain members of the Ministry in the recent catastrophe appears from the following passage in the same letter: "My quondam colleague" (Sir Richard Steele) "indeed set the matter in a clear light, by telling us, that a nation of more wealth and greater credit than any in Europe, within less than two years, was reduced to what we see by a few cyphering cits, a species of men of equal capacity in all respects (that of cheating a deluded people only excepted) with those animals who saved the capitol, who were now to be screened by those of greater figure, for what reason they best knew, others were at liberty to judge[1]." Two days later Governor Pitt complained of the dilatoriness of the Directors in complying with the order of the House, and was assured that the next day part of the papers called for would be forthcoming. That he had good reason to press for the prompt production of the accounts soon became only too evident. For short as the interval allowed them had been, the Directors had taken advantage of it to make away with several of the incriminating papers. From the books that

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 686.

were presented to the House pages had been torn out, and many suspicious alterations made in the entries that remained.

Throughout this business, the Governor can hardly have failed to recall the result of a similar inquiry into the accounts of the Old East India Company in his earlier days, which had disclosed the expenditure of £80,000 of the Company's cash in bribes to some of William the Third's Ministers for their unconstitutional services in obtaining a renewal of the Company's Charter without Parliamentary sanction, and had led to the impeachment and disgrace of the King's Prime Minister, the Duke of Leeds. He knew Stanhope too well to believe him capable of any dishonourable conduct; but he may well have entertained serious doubts of the integrity of Sunderland, Aislabie and Craggs. He may also possibly have remembered the stock jobbing propensities of his old enemy, Sir Josiah Child, who was reported to have made the greater part of his huge fortune by inducing the Directors of the East India Company to declare large dividends when he had stock for sale, and small ones when it suited his purpose to buy. But with all his experience of the depravity of the London stock jobbers, he can hardly have been prepared for some of the astounding revelations which his insistence on a Parliamentary inquiry into the accounts of the South Sea Company had helped now to bring to light. The Secret Committee of the Commons who were entrusted with the investigation in their first report informed the House of the illegal creation, by the Directors before their Act had been passed, of more than half a million fictitious stock, which had been subsequently sold for more than one and a quarter millions, and for which no money had been paid by the important personages to whom it had in the first instance been

allotted in consideration of their services in getting the Bill through Parliament. Prominent amongst the names of those whom the Committee alleged to have been corrupted were Sunderland and Aislabie, the heads of the Treasury, Craggs the Secretary of State, Charles Stanhope, a kinsman of the Prime Minister, the King's mistresses, the Duchess of Kendal and Madame de Platen, the two nieces of the latter lady, and Craggs, the Postmaster-General, the father of the Secretary of State. Of the ministers thus denounced, Secretary Craggs died most opportunely on the very day on which the report was presented, and very shortly afterwards his father, the Postmaster-General, committed suicide. Aislabie, after a long defence, was unanimously found guilty by the Commons, expelled the House and committed to the Tower. But in the meanwhile, before the Committee had made their report, the nation had suffered a very serious loss by the sudden death of Lord Stanhope, who was admitted by all parties to have been in no way concerned in the widespread corruption of his colleagues; to have scrupulously abstained from any dealings in the Company's stock, and to have done his best to sift the whole scandal to the bottom. At his instance simultaneously with the investigations of the Secret Committee of the Commons, the House of Lords had under examination some of the Directors of the Company, and elicited from them many of the more important facts disclosed in the report of that Committee. On the 4th of February Sir John Blunt, one of the chief projectors of the South Sea Scheme, whilst under examination refused to answer some of the questions put to him, on which a debate arose as to the procedure to be adopted by the House. In the course of it the Duke of Wharton made a violent personal attack on Stanhope, comparing him to Sejanus, a reflection which was highly resented

by Stanhope, who in reply compared himself to Brutus, who, he said, had not scrupled to sacrifice his own degenerate son in the public interest; from which it would appear that he was already aware of the charges about to be brought against his kinsman. In ordinary circumstances the interchange by the two noble Lords of these reminiscences of their youthful studies in Roman History, so characteristic of the Parliamentary oratory of the day, might not have led to any very serious results. But at this exciting crisis it was otherwise. To quote from the *Parliamentary History*[1]: "My Lord Stanhope spoke with so great vehemence, that finding himself taken suddenly with a violent headache, he went home and was cupped, which eased him a little. The next morning he was let blood; and continued pretty well till about six o'clock in the evening, when falling into a drowsiness, his physicians thought fit to order a glyster: but as he was turning himself to receive it, he fell on his face and was instantly suffocated." Thus at a time when his reputation and powers were at their highest, this great soldier statesman came to an untimely end, "leaving behind him," to quote the words of his descendant the historian[2], "few equals in integrity and none in knowledge of foreign affairs. His disinterestedness in money matters was so well known, that in the South Sea transactions, and even during the highest popular fury, he stood clear, not merely of any charge, but even of any suspicion with the public."

Fatal as the South Sea Scheme had been to him, nothing could have been more fortunate for his rival, Walpole, than the whole course of events connected with it. When first brought forward, being in opposition he had opposed it. When it had gone through, and he had been taken into the Ministry,

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 705. [2] Mahon 2. 28.

he speculated in the stock, as he had a legitimate right to do, and added thereby very considerably to his fortune, by selling out at the highest price it ever reached. By the collapse of Craggs and Aislabie and the resignation of Sunderland he became at once the head of the Treasury, where he gained such great credit by his measures for the restoration of the public credit, that a year later he became the leading Minister of the Crown, a post which he retained for the next twenty years without a rival.

The death of Stanhope, with whom he had always been on the best of terms, must have come as a great shock to his father-in-law, besides throwing on him the responsibility, no light one in his declining years, of looking after the Stanhope children, of whom their father had by his will left him the guardian. Of these there seem to have been four at the time of Stanhope's death. A few months later their mother gave birth to two more, as appears from a letter written by the Governor to Robert in the following August, in which he says: "Your sister Stanhope was brought to bed Saturday the 19th of a brave lusty boy and a girl[1]." From that time onwards her health seems to have broken down. In November of the following year her father writes from Pall Mall: "I returned from Cheevening in the afternoon, where I left your sister Stanhope in an indifferent condition[2]." Three months later she died, and he writes to Robert: "This is to advise you of the death of your sister Stanhope Sunday morning last, about eleven o'clock at Kensington, whether she was hurried the Wensday before by her physitians; and this day sennight she is intended to be interr'd at Cheevening[3]."

The death of his favourite daughter, following so closely on that of her husband, must have been a grievous trial to the old man, on whom the whole

[1] Dropmore I. 66. [2] Dropmore I. 68. [3] Dropmore I. 69.

care of the young family and the estate of their father had now devolved. For Stanhope had left him sole executor. He seems to have made a home for the children at Swallowfield. Two months after his daughter's death he writes to Robert: "I hope all my daughter Stanhope's children are at my house at Swallowfield this evening, except Lady Lucy" (the eldest of the girls) "who is with Lady Fane; and my Lord Stanhope we intend to put to Eaton after Whitsuntide, so that there is four children and their servants there, which I intend shall remain till they are fitting to go out to boarding schools[1]."

His own health had already begun to give way. A few weeks after Lady Stanhope's death he had written: "This morning I was taken so very ill with the loss of all my limbs, that I thought I should not have lived till the evening[2]." A week later he seems to have got somewhat better; for he says: "Since I was taken so very ill, I have not been to the House, but hope I am pritty well recovered, but am busied very much in taking an inventory of my daughter Stanhope's effects; and we shall all Saturday next go to Chevening to settle her affairs there and dispose of the young family[3]." Six months later, he writes again: "I have my health by fits and girds. The trouble I have of my business I am afraid will shorten my days. I wish I had somebody to take it off my hands." Again, a week later: "I receiv'd yours of the 12th instant at Cheevening. I came to London Thursday night last, tired almost to death coming that short journey." In this enfeebled condition, he might well have looked for some assistance from his sons, all three of whom were now grown up, married and well started in life. He had done much for them; and the time had now come when they might not unreasonably

[1] Dropmore I. 70. [2] Dropmore I. 69. [3] Dropmore I. 71.

have been expected to be of some comfort and service to him. But so far from helping him, they seem one and all of them to have been more or less a source of worry and anxiety to him for the remainder of his life. Nor was he able to obtain assistance from any of them, with the possible exception of Lord Londonderry, to whom he seems in his later years to have relegated some of his business affairs, but who is reported to have had failings which were great disqualifications for the honest performance of such work. Lord Rosebery says of him: "One infers from casual hints that he was not embarrassed by scruples[1]." Lord Camelford goes so far as to say, "He was a man of no character, and of parts that were calculated only for the knavery of business, in which he overreached others and at last himself." It would appear that his father before taking him on as his assistant had himself been far from satisfied with his business transactions with him. For in a letter written to Robert in 1723 he says: "The misfortunes that all my sons has brought upon me, whereby you have wronged me of a great number of thousands, which has reduced me so low that I cannot lend you a much less sum than you desire; and all of you have brought me to these hard circumstances which, I believe, will very soon carry my grey hairs to the grave, and I care not how soon it is; for that I am surrounded with the plagues and troubles of this world[2]."

Robert was now a confirmed valetudinarian. His father writes to him in March 1723: "I am sorry for your indispositions, for gout, gravel and stone are greivous companions, which I wish you well rid of. For my part, I grow weaker and weaker, and think cannot hold it long." In the following April he sends him "an unquestionable reciept against the

[1] Rosebery 12. [2] Dropmore 1. 69.

gravel," which unfortunately has been lost. It was probably by necessity rather than by choice that he had recourse in his later years to his second son in business matters. Robert he had tried and found wanting. His youngest son John was impossible. He had been the spoilt child of the family, and had had better chances than either of his brothers, but had turned out the worst of the three. After he had left Eton, his father had bought him a commission in the Guards and given him a seat in Parliament. He is said by Lord Camelford "to have been a personal favourite of the King," but to have "sacrificed his health, his honour and his fortunes to a flow of libertinism, which sunk him for many years before his death in contempt and obscurity[1]." His father refers to him in one of his letters as "the careless and good for nothing Colonel, and I fear never will be otherwise[2]." Amongst other tales that we are told of him, he is reported on one occasion, when an estate agent had brought up his father's rents to Pall Mall, to have gone into the room where the money was being counted over, swept it all with his sword into his hat, and escaped with it into the street[3]. Latterly, whenever he stayed with his father in Pall Mall, it seems to have been the old gentleman's custom to take the precaution of having the keys carried up to his bedside at 10 o'clock every night[4]. As a typical instance of the Colonel's monetary transactions we may probably take the following complaint of his kinsman, Henry Sutton, who writes to Robert to ask what he is to do "concerning the ten pounds which he has had of mine in his hands ever since you was last in Cornwal. When I met him at Swallowfield I was a little surprised to find that he took not the least notice to me

[1] Rosebery 13.
[2] Dropmore I. 73.
[3] Rosebery 13.
[4] Dropmore I. 70.

of the debt, or made any offer for a time of payment. And after I mentioned it to him, all I could get was a note of his hand. To make amends for this and the injury he did my horse by his riding post he told me I should have his little Dartmoor gelding that was at Boconnock. This promise he renewed to me several times before divers witnesses and yet, if we may judge of men's thoughts by their actions, I dare believe he did not design it at the same time. I am sure the event does but too plainly confirm me in this suspicion, for the very moment he came to Solden, he sent away to Boconnock for his horse, long enough, he was sure, before I could get there ; and this without sending the least excuse or promise to make it up to me some other way.

"I must confess this last trick of the Colonel has tried my patience to a degree much further than the loss of my money. Had I had to do with some scoundrel abandoned wretch, it would not have been so surprizing to have met with such treatment. But when gentlemen persons of rank and distinction, can stoop to little vile actions, what can be more shocking than such an inconsistency of character and deportment ? It was the relation the Colonel bears to the Governor and yourself that has hitherto withheld me from going to extremities with him. But since he has behaved himself so unworthy that relation, I hope it will be no offence, if I endeavour to get my own by legal process. This is my fixed resolution, if it meets with your consent and approbation."

In view of this and other correspondence that has survived relating to the Governor's sons, it is difficult to endorse the opinion expressed by the writer of his funeral sermon, that "it may be reckoned among the felicities of his life, that he who had passed through so much business, should have had so many years of Retirement and Leisure before his Death."

But whatever unhappiness his sons may have caused him, there can be little doubt that he derived much pleasure from his grandchildren. He never refers to them in his correspondence otherwise than in terms of affection; and we have the testimony of others, who watched him closely, who have recorded his fondness for them. When Robert's children were staying at his house in Pall Mall in 1716, and their father was in the Governor's black books, General Stewart writes to Robert: "I must however acquainte you that hee is extreme kind to your children, and is making the girls very fine, which Mrs Cholmondeley with care and kindness manages for them[1]." As has been seen, he made Swallowfield a home for the young Stanhopes. In August 1721, he writes to his son Robert: "Tomorrow morning I sett out for Swallowfield, and shall call at Eaton to take your two boys with me, and some of their comrogues, and will sett them down there again on Monday[2]." Of William, the future Earl of Chatham, then sixteen years of age and at Eton, he writes from Pall Mall to Robert some two years before his death: "I sett out hence from Swallowfield Friday next; your son William goes with me"; and again: "He is a hopefull lad, and doubt not but he will answer yours and all his friends' expectation." From Swallowfield he writes on another occasion: "I shall be glad to see Will here as he goes to Eton[3]." This hope seems to have been gratified; for a fortnight later he says: "Monday last I left Will at Eton. If you and your wife, Hariet and Tom" (Robert's eldest daughter and son) "will come hither, you shall be very wellcome, and my coach shall meet you at Sutton." At another time he tells Robert that he shall be willing to assist his grandson Thomas in "his improvements and education abroad."

[1] Dropmore I. 58. [2] Dropmore I. 66. [3] Dropmore I. 74.

He made his last will in July 1721, half a year after Stanhope's death[1]. With his experience of his eldest son's character and propensities, it would have been in the highest degree imprudent to have allowed him to take any part in the administration of his estate, or to have left the other members of the family dependent on his tender mercies. He had therefore chosen as his trustees and executors the Earl of Pembroke, his cousin George Pitt of Strathfieldsay, his only surviving son-in-law Charles Cholmondeley, and his cousin Sergeant Chapple of the Middle Temple. The two former of these were old friends; and he had made them trustees of a former will before leaving India, to which he refers in a letter written to Robert from Bergen in 1710[2]. Chapple, as has been seen, he was in the habit of consulting in legal difficulties during the later years of his life. By his will he left the great bulk of his landed property, strictly entailed, to Robert and his heirs[3], comprising the manors of Blandford St Mary and Kynaston and all his other land in Dorset, Abbot's Ann in Hampshire, Stratford in Wilts, all the properties which he had bought from Lady Mohun in Devon and Cornwall, the manor of Swallowfield in Berks, his houses, ground rents and leases of Crown property in Westminster, and certain leaseholds in Old Sarum. To his grandson Thomas, the eldest son of Lord Londonderry, and his heirs he left entailed the two manors of Branwell and Trethanna in Cornwall, and certain lands at Old Sarum. To Lord Londonderry himself he left £100 for mourning, with the right to occupy his house at Pall Mall for a year after his death. To his son John he left nothing at all; but to John's wife an annuity of £200 a year, subsequently increased by one of his codicils to £400,

[1] Hedges 3. 163. [2] Dropmore 1. 47.
[3] Hedges 3. 163–166.

with an annuity of £200 to her eldest son, in the event of her having one, and £4000 for portions for any younger children she might have. To his own wife he left £200 a year in lieu of dower. His residuary estate was to go to Robert, but the greater part, if not the whole of it, must have been swallowed up by the legacies and annuities which he left to all his grandchildren and the litigation that ensued after his death between his three sons. In the recital to his codicil of the 24th of November 1723, he gives as a reason for reducing some of the legacies and annuities left by his will, that "he had sustained very great losses by the late South Sea Scheme and otherwise." It is, however, noteworthy that the date of the will, which he thus alters, was July 1721, some six months after the collapse of the South Sea Scheme, when he must, it may be presumed, have known the extent of any losses he had incurred from that source. What his other serious losses were can only be conjectured. It is to be feared that they consisted mainly of the sums extracted from him from time to time by fair means or foul by one or another of his sons. It is pitiable to think how persistently he was pestered by them for money in his later years. He writes on one occasion to Robert: "Money I have none, for that all my bags are emptied, so I have none to lend; but rather than I will want for anything I will sell all I have purchased[1]"; and again shortly after: "Don't press me any further for I cannot lend you the money and die in debt." That he was fully aware that he was unfairly dealt with by his children seems clear from a letter in which he says: "It is true that I have mett with foul play all round me, and being grown old, I cannot struggle with it."

His old acquaintance Lady Grandison, who had

[1] Dropmore I. 69.

so busied herself in endeavouring to keep the peace between him and his son Robert, predeceased him by a few months, dying in January 1726. The following account of her obsequies sent to Robert by Sir Thomas Hardy is a typical example of the lavish expenditure which it was the custom of that day to incur on the funerals of members of the upper classes[1]:

"I am now to tell you that after Lady Grandison's lying in state three days, she was deposited last night into the great Duke of Buckingham's vault in Westminster Abbey. The General has spared no expense, and there was four Dukes for pall bearers, Lord Grandison Chief mourner suported by the Earls of Clarendon and Dalkeith, and Captain Fitzgerald, train bearer, and eight Earls assistant to the pall bearers, who had scarfes, hat bands, rings and gloves, all cloaked. Then came the rest of the company with cloaks, hat bands, rings and gloves, according to their rank. There was a great deal of confusion before we sett out (which was not till half an hour after ten) between the heralds and a silly undertaker (the upholsterer of the family), but after we sett out there was no stop till we came to light at the Abbey West Gate, out of which we did not get again till half an hour after twelve. There was 16 mourning coaches, and 17 noblemen and gentlemen's coaches, with 8 branches to every coach; and there was about forty men on horseback, with a branch to every horseman; and I was like to forgot that there was a footman to every coach door in black with a long hat band.

This instant I have received yours of the 10th, which leads me to tell you that the cofin was covered with crimson velvet, with narrow gold lace twice round the edges; the coronet was tin, and so were the handles; and the plate with her name, title and age, which they called 63 upon it, (although the rings say 68) was of block tinn, and that is all the finery. She lay in state in the back parlour, which was hanged with rusty velvet, and the chair of state was in the four parlour, hung with black, under a canopy adorned with escochens as customary. The General recovers, as they say, very fast."

Two days later the Governor, who had no love himself of ostentatious funerals and had written home from India to Robert[2], "I am surprised at the extravagant funeral of my son William. I should have thought that half the sum charged would have

[2] Dropmore I. 74. [2] Dropmore I. 32.

buried all my family," writes: "1725–26. January 15. Pall Mall. All the news here is that General Stuart is going to marry Mrs. Alstone....There was a great burial made for my Lady, which I did not see; all that were her friends are glad she is out of this world."

Some six weeks before his death he was entertaining his friends at his house in Pall Mall. Sir Thomas Hardy writes to Robert:

"1725–26. Pall Mall. Your saying you had writt to my opposite neighbour" (Governor Pitt) "the last post, I went to dine with him; and he said he had not heard from you this great while, and Sutton told me the same thing...so that your letter has miscarryed. But I do not apprehend that there is anything amiss, and we drank your health, Londonderry and Chomley present. The old gentleman was out of order last week, but is now pretty well again; but breaks still, and complains much of want of stomach, and eates more than I can do[1]."

He seems shortly afterwards to have gone to Swallowfield, from whence he wrote the following letter to Robert:

"1726. April 10. Swallowfield. I desire you to send the Duke of Buckingham's works" (edited by Pope) "to this place. In your next pray send me the price of all sorts of graine."

On the 2nd of May, Robert announces his death to his son Thomas Pitt, who had started on his continental tour and was then staying at Utrecht.

"1726. May 2. Pall Mall. I am under the dissatisfaction of being obliged to advise you of the death of my father, Thursday last at Swallowfield after two days' illness. His distemper was a mixture of appoplexy and palsie. I am going out of town tomorrow in order to pay the last devoirs to our deceased parent, which are to be done at St Mary Blandford in Dorsetshire the 17th instant[2]."

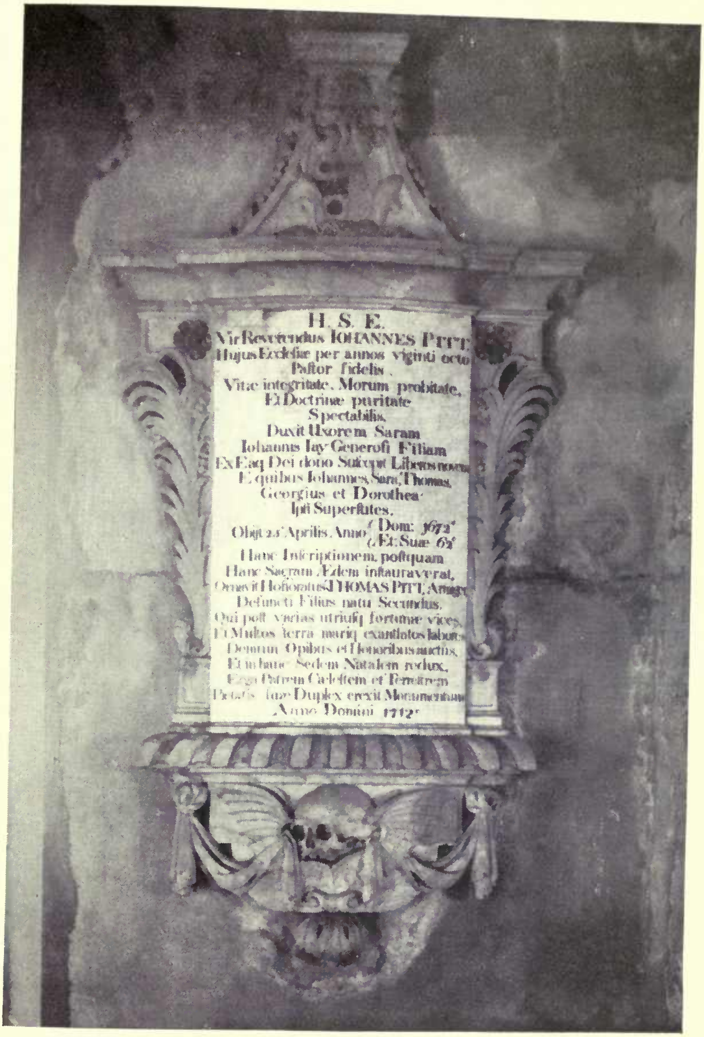
On his return from India Thomas Pitt had erected a handsome monument to his father in the church of Blandford St Mary, besides restoring the

[1] Dropmore I. 74. [2] Dropmore I. 75.

church and presenting it with a fine set of communion plate, two pieces of which are still preserved in the Rectory. His son Robert, when he came into his inheritance, indulged in no similar manifestation of respect to his father's memory; and the only record of the Governor's demise that is now to be found in his native parish consists of the curt entry in the register, "Thomas Pitt Esqr was buried May 21, 1726."

If the old man had thought that by leaving the great bulk of his property to Robert and his heirs he would make his eldest son more kindly disposed towards the rest of the family, or that by arranging for the administration of his estate by others he was likely to prevent further family disputes and discords, he was woefully mistaken. Bad as the terms were on which Robert had lived for years with his brothers, whilst he had been dependent on his father, and in fear of being disinherited, so far from improving they became rapidly worse, when he found himself in undisputed possession of his father's great landed estates. Within a month after the Governor had been laid in his grave he wrote to his son Thomas from Pall Mall: "The untoward behaviour of your uncles, with whom I forbid you all manner of correspondence upon pain of my highest displeasure, has obliged me to come to town to assert my right to several things, which they were unfairly endeavouring to invade[1]." Some months later he filed a petition in Chancery against his father's executors alleging that his brother, Lord Londonderry, owed his father upwards of £95,000, secured by note, bond and mortgage, and that he not only denied owing this sum to the estate, but claimed from it £10,000 as due to him. In another petition in Chancery he stated that his father, after the

[1] Dropmore I. 78.




Monument erected by Thomas Pitt to his father's memory in the church of Blandford St Mary

death of Earl Stanhope, had assumed the guardianship of Stanhope's eldest son[1], the management of whose property he had, being in years and infirm, delegated to Lord Londonderry, who had received various sums from the Stanhope estates, for which he had rendered no accounts.

In the meanwhile, not to be behindhand in the wrangling, Mrs Thomas Pitt and her son John also filed bills against the Governor's executors, the former for the recovery of her dower and the latter claiming an annuity. Writing of these proceedings to his legal adviser, Robert says:

"I observe the collusion made use of in the bills of my brother John by hooking in the Trustees and Executors to be parties; but I hope such collusive practices will not be countenanced to load my father's personal estate with the cost of their suits, who by the underhand contrivances of even the Executors themselves are endeavouring to defeat a will which the Executors are sworn to defend. I received a letter today from Wiltshire which tells me my good mother came to my house rhodomontading and talking like a madwoman, and stirring up strifes with my tenants against mee.......You see what people I have to deal with. I will order my doors for the future to be shut upon them all; perhaps they think by her bill for dower, to push mee into an augmentation of her annuity; but I am resolved to push things to all extremities with her and all her gang, be the consequence what it will.......I have been thinking that as by old Madam's bill, I am called upon to show what lands my father died seized of, it is a good reason for looking into the deeds.......However I very well know that all the estates are in trustees' names[2]."

How these complicated claims and counter claims would have been determined, if the litigants had lived long enough, it is impossible to say. But Robert and his mother both died in the following year, and Lord Londonderry two years afterwards[3]. Robert's eldest son, who succeeded to the entailed properties, seems not to have been legally responsible for his father's debts and declined to accept any

[1] Dropmore I. 85. [2] Dropmore I. 86. [3] Rosebery 15.

responsibility for them. In his turn he fell out with his mother, and the Chancery proceedings which ensued between the two ended in her retirement to France, where she died shortly afterwards apparently in straitened circumstances. The rancour, which after the Governor's death was displayed by so many members of his family towards each other, enables us to realise the constant misery and trouble to which the poor old man must have been subjected during his lifetime by their quarrels. He had written to Robert twenty years before he died[1]: "What hellish planet is it that influences you all, and causes such unaccountable distraction?......Have all of you shook hands with shame, that you regard not any of the tyes of Christianity, humanity, consanguinity, duty, good morality, or any thing that makes you differ from beasts, but must run from one end of the Kingdome to the other, aspersing one another and aiming at the ruine and destruction of each other? ......Did ever mother, brother and sisters study one another's ruine and destruction more than my unfortunate and cursed family have done?......You say my great concerne is the wonder of the world. Soe is the confusion in my family." If he could have come to life again within a few months of his decease it is unlikely that he would have found it necessary to qualify this only too faithful appreciation of the quarrelsome proclivities of his children.

[1] Dropmore I. 21, 23.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### HIS CHARACTER

SUCH conflicting opinions have been expressed by those who have placed on record their views of some of the more important features in the character of Governor Pitt, that it is impossible to approach the task of forming an independent estimate of his merits and demerits without some diffidence. Of the circumstances which led to his leaving the East India Company's ship at Balasore at the outset of his career so little is known that it is difficult to say whether it was a mere youthful escapade brought about by a quarrel with his superior officers or a premeditated desertion deliberately planned for the purpose of enabling him to accept some tempting offer on the part of Vincent or Edwards, whose service he undoubtedly entered very shortly afterwards as a sailor in several voyages on their behalf from Bengal to Surat and Persia. To whatever cause it may have been due, it would be unreasonable to assume from it that he was necessarily dishonest or dishonourable in his after life. Still less reason is there to infer, as has frequently been done, that any discredit attaches to him from his early adventures in the interloping trade, which was ultimately declared by a resolution of the House of Commons to be a perfectly legitimate business, in which every Englishman had a right to engage. The only legal decision to the contrary ever obtained by the

East India Company was that of Lord Justice Jeffreys and the Court of the King's Bench, delivered a few days before the death of Charles the Second at a time of very exceptional reaction in favour of stretching the Royal prerogative, and based on grounds which must have seemed as ludicrous to the general public of the day as they would have been regarded by the Merry Monarch himself, if they had ever been reported to him. That Pitt himself was not in after life ashamed of his interloping adventures is clear from the passage in his letter to his cousin, Consul John Pitt, in 1699[1], in which he says: "For the supporting my Creditt, I dont remember I was indebted or Concern'd in anything whatever that could be Censur'd by any unless itt was interlopeing, which I never repented of to this day." The Court of the Company must have been well aware of his antecedents, including his desertion of their ship and his subsequent interloping experiences. That with this knowledge in their possession they appointed him Governor of Fort St George is the best evidence which they could have given that there was nothing in his previous career which in their opinion disqualified him for the post.

On the question of his integrity, we learn from Lord Rosebery[2] that the Governor's great-grandson, Lord Camelford, though a relentless critic of his family, has recorded the fact that "he amassed a fortune, which was reckoned prodigious in those days without the slightest stain on his reputation." And on a careful review of his career, it will be found that there are strong grounds for believing that this was the case.

On the other hand it is only fair to say that Sir Henry Yule, who has done more than any other man to revive his memory, and who was a great

[1] Hedges 3. 48. [2] Rosebery 3.

admirer of some of his best qualities, has suggested that "he was by no means delicately scrupulous," and asks, "how should a man have been so, whose early life had been passed like his, struggling to maintain trade in the teeth of a Company, that claimed a monoply, and that looked on him as an enemy with whom no terms were to be kept, in a country open to every kind of intrigue and corruption?" But he adds, "Nevertheless he had a standard of duty and honour, if not a high one, and I believe he kept to it."

The German historian, Von Ruville, has a much lower opinion of his integrity. He maintains that Pitt obtained his Parliamentary influence "by the wealth which he had unrighteously acquired[1]." "Thomas," he tells us, "was not a character to remain unstained in an environment essentially corrupt. Indeed in this respect, Thomas might be regarded as an element actively making for corruption......Granted that he was obliged to find some subsidiary source of income, his official salary being only £300, the fact remains that he transgressed all permissible methods of amassing wealth. It may almost be said that he used his position as governor to continue his business as an interloper on a larger scale[2]." As an example of his iniquitous methods of proceeding, he goes on to say, "Besides his purchase of the great diamond, after the union of the two Companies he bought up the bills of the New Company, which was deeply in debt, for thirty nine thousand pagodas, presented them in London, and bought an estate of the proceeds."

The transaction here referred to, which Yule also seems to consider a questionable one, is fully gone into in Chapter XVIII of the present work. The more closely it is examined, the clearer it will appear

[1] Von Ruville, I. 21, 26. [2] Von Ruville I. 36, 37.

that it was questionable only in the sense in which everything the Governor did on behalf of the New Company was questionable, that is to say, that the majority of the Directors of that Company, who were his irreconcilable enemies, were pretty certain to call it in question, however much they might themselves have profited by it. Their treatment of him, and of his fellow officials at Fort St George, who had come to the rescue of the New Company in the matter of these bills, is, to say the least of it, far more difficult to defend than any action on his part in that business.

Von Ruville's statements that in his capacity of Governor "he transgressed all permissible methods of amassing wealth," and "that it may almost be said that he used his position to continue his business as an interloper on a larger scale," will not bear examination. Not a scrap of evidence is given by the learned historian, who has made it, in support of this very serious charge. Had there been the slightest ground for believing that the Governor in his private trade was illicitly competing with his employers, it is inconceivable that his enemies' spies at Fort St George, who were constantly writing home complaining of his other supposed delinquencies, should have failed to expose his malpractices in this direction, and that there should be no reference whatever to them in the very voluminous correspondence that passed during the whole period of his Governorship between him and the Court. Nothing could have more effectually undermined his position with the Directors of the Company, the main object which Fraser and his associates were scheming to bring about, than the exposure of any such malpractices. As a matter of fact his chief offence in the eyes of his enemies, the New Company, was that he served the Old Company only too well, for which

reason he retained the confidence of so many of the Court till the end.

Of the ability and success with which he discharged his duties as Governor, at one of the most critical periods in the history of early British India, there can be no two opinions. Even Von Ruville[1] admits that in spite of what he terms "his doubtful past, his notorious avarice and his domineering character, he had admirably justified his choice. He had prevented the rival Company from gaining the upper hand, and even from developing to any great extent, and he had repulsed the attacks of his native assailants. To him was due all credit that the Old Company had surmounted the crisis." Yule says of him[2]: "That his reputation was great during his rule at Madras, and had spread not only over the coasts of India, but to England, may be gathered from the words of Sir Nicholas Waite, whom Pitt so scorned, and who speaks of him as 'the Great President,' and from those of Peter Wentworth, 'the Great Pits is turn out.' It was his general force of character, his fidelity to the cause of his employers (in spite of his master fault of keenness in money making), his decision in dealing with difficulties, that won his reputation. He was always ready; always till that last burst, which brought about his recall, cool in action, however bitter in language; he always saw what to do and did it. He maintained the cause of his masters, the Old Company, unflinchingly and triumphantly, when every wind seemed to be against them; he was indefatigable and successful in recovering their debts and in winding up their affairs. The New Company, once his enemies, gladly put the winding up of their affairs into his hand; whilst the United Company, largely composed of those whom he had defied, maintained him as

[1] Von Ruville I. 33. [2] Hedges 3. 124.

their President. And though his growing impatience gave them a chance to strike at him, which they could not forego, we see that they had no sooner done so, than they repented."

There are two points that call for comment even in this very appreciative estimate: one that Pitt lost his head in the quarrel of the Right and Left Hand Castes; the other the reference to "his master fault of keenness in money making." On the former it is true that the Court of the United Company made his conduct their pretext for removing him from office. But it is none the less clear that they could never have done so had it not been for the untimely death of his firm supporter Sir Thomas Cook, which as assuredly brought his Governorship to a sudden end in the midst of his unbroken successes as that of George the Second some half-century later did the unprecedented career of his famous grandson as War Minister. As a matter of fact, as has been shown, he brought the quarrel of the two castes to a satisfactory conclusion, notwithstanding the treachery of Fraser, without the loss of a single man and without undue severity to his hated enemy, thereby securing in very difficult circumstances a much-needed reform in the administration of the Company's business, which the Court seem to have themselves desired him to carry out[1]. His conduct throughout this affair was only one of the many signal instances of the coolness, foresight and patience with which in times of danger he discharged his official duties. "I never mett," he writes of it[2], "with soe knotty a villany in my life, nor ever with anything that gave me soe much trouble and perplexity." But he saw it safely through to the great benefit of the Company.

In dealing with Yule's second point, the suggestion

[1] Hedges 3. 113. [2] Hedges 3. 111.

that Pitt's master fault was keenness in money making, it is only right to remember that the East India Company, his masters, were not a philanthropic missionary society, but a body of English merchants; and that their servants came out to India for the purpose of making money for their masters and for themselves. Some of their servants proved hopelessly incompetent, and like poor Consul Littleton lost their own and their employers' money from lack of business capacity. Others were ne'er-do-wells, whom their friends at home were only too glad to be rid of at any cost. Others were indisposed to exert themselves in the enervating climate of India, and inclined whilst drawing the Company's pay and their subsistence allowances to do as little as they decently could in return. Hedges gives many such instances. That Pitt, unlike some of his fellows, was keen in making money for his employers and himself cannot in fairness be attributed to him as a fault. It is as unreasonable to blame him for keenness in this respect as it would be to blame a soldier for being keen in the pursuit of his profession. Had this keenness led him to sacrifice the permanent interests of the Company or the English prestige in India, there might be good ground for regarding it as a serious blemish in his character. But it is clear that this was not the case. No instance can be cited in which he failed to do his duty in either of these respects. Under his rule no native potentate or official dared to take personal liberties with any Englishman in the Carnatic, although during the greater part of the time that he was Governor the Company's servants at Surat were persistently subjected to ignominious imprisonment and in Bengal[1] Englishmen were actually flogged in the public

[1] Hedges 3. 80.

durbars. That the immunity of Englishmen in his Presidency from similar insults and outrages was due to his personal influence cannot be doubted. He had hardly left India, when it ceased. A few months after his departure two English officers were waylaid and taken prisoners by the Rajah of Ginji, treated with great barbarity and kept in custody, after Pitt's successor had paid a handsome ransom for their release. Well might Pitt's former enemies on the Court write out to India, "Had the like case happen'd in the late President's time, he would have recover'd them both at a tenth part of the Money, or rather the Rajah would never have dared the surprising of them[1]."

As a matter of fact not only his own fellow countrymen, but other European nationalities in India, had reason to be thankful to him for maintaining their prestige. Salmon, his contemporary, who had known him in Madras, writes of him[2]: "Nor was the concern of this generous English Governor confined to his own nation, but extended to every people who stood in need of his assistence, of which the Danes are a single instance: for when the King of Tanjore, at the instigation of the Dutch, as was generally understood, had laid siege to Penicombai, then did the Governor of Fort St George, send a seasonable detachment to their assistance. I still see the Governor, methinks, coming upon parade, and haranguing these troops in their respective languages before they embarked in such terms as induced the soldiers to express the utmost contempt of the danger they are entring upon, and seemed to foretel the success they afterwards obtained."

He had exceptional advantages of great importance over his predecessors and successors, the Merchant Governors of Fort St George. He had

[1] Hedges 3. 122. [2] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, 2. 72.

not only acquired in early life a more intimate and practical experience of the Eastern trade and the habits and characteristics of the natives and their rulers in each of the three Presidencies than any other Governor sent out by the Court from England had possessed, but he must also during his ten years' residence in England, after bringing Vincent home, have obtained a better insight into the requirements of his employers and the British public and the political parties of the day, than it had been possible for any servant of the Company to acquire, whose experiences had been limited to India. He came out as Governor of Fort St George a successful London merchant, a member of Parliament of some standing, and in possession of a larger working capital of his own than most of his predecessors had had at their disposal. Consequently he was not hampered by lack of means as some of them had been in carrying on the legitimate private trade from which the Governor was supposed to derive the main emoluments of his office. He held the post twice as long as any of his predecessors; and it was almost inevitable that he should make a larger fortune than they had done. It is quite unnecessary to infer from its magnitude, which has been greatly exaggerated, that it was made dishonestly. As Colonel Love has recently pointed out in his *Vestiges of Old Madras*[1], his governorship was the golden age of Madras in respect of the development of trade and increase of wealth. The more closely his mercantile transactions are examined, the more difficult it will be to find in them any ground for suspecting him of any dishonest or illicit trading. Von Ruville[2] practically admits this difficulty, which he endeavours to meet by saying, "It is not easy to convict him of malpractices, for he was a most

[1] *Vestiges of Old Madras*, 2. 1.

[2] Von Ruville 1. 21.

cautious operator." He must indeed have been a preternaturally cautious operator to have been able to continue, as Von Ruville has suggested, to carry on his old trade as an interloper on an extended scale for nearly twelve years undetected, surrounded as he was for the greater part of the time in his narrow domain at Fort St George by his enemies' spies constantly on the look-out to report any short-comings of his that they could discover to their employers, the Court of the New Company in London.

Three imputations only too readily attach in every age to successful business men, who have started in life with nothing and have made large fortunes. The first is, that their riches have been dishonestly acquired. When this has been disposed of, two remain. The one that attached to Pitt's successors, the Nabobs of the next generation, was the vulgar ostentation of their wealth. Finding no trace of any such failing, the Governor's detractors have been compelled to fall back on the third customary imputation, avarice. Von Ruville[1] tells us that Pitt's "leading characteristic was avarice." "Mean and insatiable avarice appeared throughout his life"; and though no authorities are cited in support of it, we are assured that "this avarice was notorious." Not to be satisfied with this accusation, he goes still further. "The fact is," he says, "that Thomas was a miser in the worst sense of the word, who wished to continue piling up money without conferring the smallest benefit upon his nearest relations. His high moral sermons upon simplicity of life and thrift were inspired only by the fear of a possible drain upon his own well filled coffers. Yet he was the more vigorously exploited by recipients unworthy of his favour[2]." "As may often be observed it was upon the more distant relatives, with whom

[1] Von Ruville I. 21, 22, 33.

[2] Von Ruville I. 58.

there was less friction, that Thomas was inclined to confer his favours, rather than upon his wife and children, who were constantly contriving to escape the crushing weight of his will and pleasure[1]."

It would puzzle the ablest advocate to justify these astounding misstatements. The Governor may or may not have been too fond of money; but that he was "exploited by recipients unworthy of his bounty; indisposed to confer the smallest benefits on his nearest relations; and more inclined to be liberal to more distant relatives than to his wife and children" is so gross a perversion of indisputable facts that it may be well to summarise briefly the evidence which conclusively disposes of it.

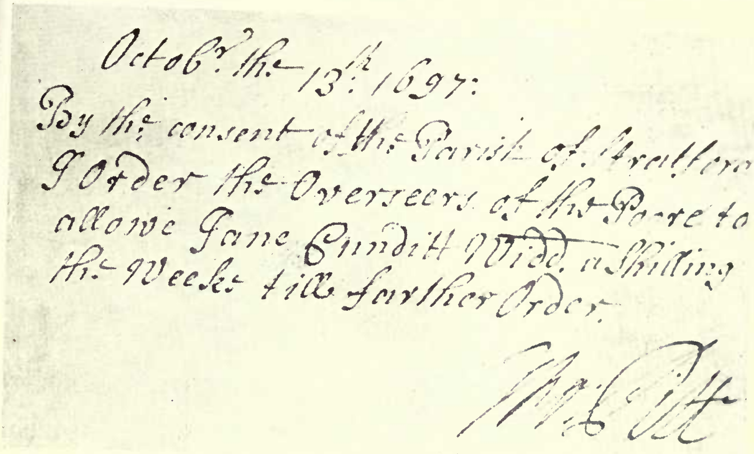
The Governor had two daughters and three sons to provide for. During his absence in India he gave explicit directions that no expense should be spared in the education of the four who remained behind in England; and there is nowhere in the whole of his voluminous correspondence the slightest suggestion either that these directions were not complied with, or that he grudged any expenditure of his money in this direction. On his return from India he provided fortunes, which there is no reason to believe were considered inadequate, for his two daughters on their marrying, one of them a husband who became the leading minister of the day, and the other a country gentlemen of good position. According to his son Robert's own admission, he made up his eldest son's income during his own lifetime to a clear £1400 a year, which in those days was equivalent to at least six or seven thousand nowadays, besides allowing him the choice of two country residences to live in free of charge, providing him with a seat in Parliament and paying his election expenses. For his other two sons he bought commissions in the

[1] Von Ruville I. 38.

Cavalry and the Guards, besides giving them each a seat in Parliament. The only one of his children who appears to have complained during his lifetime that adequate provision was not made for him was Robert, who thought that his father had done too much for his brothers and sisters, and pressed him to exclude them from his house, which he very properly resented and refused to do. By his will he left the whole of his vast property to his children and their descendants, with the exception of an annuity of £200 a year to his wife in lieu of dower, £50 to his sister Mrs Willis for mourning, £100 to his kinsman John Sutton, £50 to his servant James Abbis, £100 to each of his executors for a mourning ring, and various legacies to the poor of certain parishes. The sole foundation for the allegation that it was upon his more distant relatives that he was inclined to confer his favours rather than on his wife and children, and that he was exploited by recipients unworthy of his favour, seems to consist of a few kindly actions of his, to which reference occurs from time to time in his correspondence: for example, the expression in a letter written to his wife, whilst they were still on good terms with one another, of a desire that she would remember the poor of his native parish, Blandford St Mary; directions to pay two poor relations at Blandford sums amounting in all to £40 to relieve them in their distress[1]; and an intimation to his son Robert of his intention to educate and start in the world the youngest son of his only surviving sister, Mrs Willis[2]. In the letter containing this intimation he says: "Take great care of Mr. Haines' children for whom I have a great regard." Mr Haines was one of his fellow officials in India. Von Ruville is very careful to say, "it would be wholly erroneous to regard him as a noble

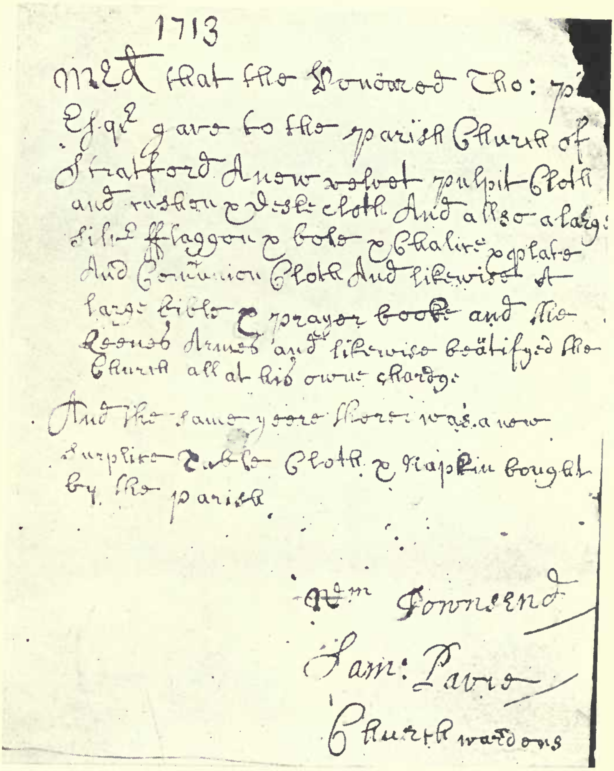
[1] Hedges 3. 62, 99.

[2] Dropmore 1. 20, 32, 35, 40.



Octob^r the 13th 1697:
By the consent of the Parish of Stratford
I Order the Overseers of the Poore to
allowe Jane Cundit Wid. a Shilling
the Weeke till farther Order.

Tho. Pitt



1713
M^d that the Honored Tho: Pi
Esq^r gave to the parish Church of
Stratford A new velvet pulpit Cloth
and cushion & Desk cloth And allso a large
silver fflaggon & bole & Chalice & plate
And Communion Cloth And likewise A
large bible & prayer booke and the
Queens Armes and likewise beautifyed the
Church all at his owne charge.

And the same yeare there was a new
surplice Table Cloth & napkin bought
by the parish

W^m Townsend
Sam: Paine
Church wardens

**Facsimiles of extracts from the parochial records of the parish of Stratford under the Castle**

*The upper one in Thomas Pitt's handwriting dated October 1697, shortly before his appointment as Governor of Fort St George, and the lower one signed by the churchwardens of the parish in 1713 after his return to England, recording his restoration of the church at his own charge and his presentation of the church plate*

character upon the strength of isolated actions such as these[1]." But at the same time he does not hesitate to build on the flimsy foundation of these isolated actions the whole fabric of his ridiculous theory that the Governor was "more inclined to be liberal to more distant relatives than to his own wife and children, and that he was exploited by recipients unworthy of his bounty."

That he was "a miser in the worst sense of the word" is obviously untrue. It may very well be doubted whether he was a miser in any sense of the word, as it is ordinarily used in the English language. He seems to have spent his money freely in many ways; to have been given to hospitality, and to have lived well and comfortably. He enlarged his country manor house at Stratford and rebuilt that at Blandford. He added a new wing to his house at Boconnoc[2], and is stated by one of his descendants to have thrown away as much money at Swallowfield as would have sufficed to have built him a county seat for his family in Dorset. He restored the churches of Blandford St Mary and Stratford, and rebuilt one at Abbot's Ann. On this expenditure Von Ruville[3] makes the characteristic comment, "How much of his own property was expended in this direction cannot be estimated, for in 1715 he received a commission from the state for the construction of 50 new churches."

It appears from the *Journals of the House of Commons* (28th June 1714) and the King's speech therein contained, that the fifty churches here referred to were built in the cities of London and Westminster and the suburbs. The gratuitous suggestion that Pitt and his fellow commissioners were guilty of the gross breach of trust that would have been involved by the application of any funds of the commission

[1] Von Ruville I. 38. [2] Rosebery 3. [3] Von Ruville I. 39.

to the restoration of two small churches in Dorset and Wiltshire is a particularly odious one; and, it need hardly be said, is unsupported by the smallest scrap of evidence. Any doubt as to the probability of Thomas Pitt's inclination to spend his own money on church restoration will be dissipated by a visit to the two churches in question. The inscription on the monument which he erected to his father in the church of Blandford St Mary on his return from India to his birthplace, "opibus et honoribus auctus," is dated 1712, three years before the date when he is alleged to have joined the Commission, the funds of which it is suggested that he may have misappropriated; and it expressly states that he had before its erection restored the church. The west tower of the church at Stratford still bears the inscription "Thos. Pitt Esqr. Benefactor. Erected Anno 1711." The churchwardens' accounts of this church for 1713 are still extant, and record the fact that in that year he gave to the church not only a fine set of communion plate still preserved, an illustration of which is given opposite to this page, but also a new pulpit cloth and cushion and a communion cloth, the velvet of which has been utilised of late years to make cushions for the altar steps, besides a large Bible and Prayer Book and the Queen's arms; and that he otherwise beautified the church "all at his own charge." The beautification probably included the fine old oak carving on the altarpiece at the east end of the church, and the altar rails, and possibly the fine old pulpit with its quaint hour-glass, although this is said to have been of earlier date. He also gave the church at Blandford St Mary a complete set of communion plate, similar to that at Stratford; but the flagon and chalice of the Blandford plate were unfortunately melted down in the last century, as being ugly and cumbrous. The paten and alms

The Communion Plate presented by Thomas Pitt to the church at Stratford under the Castle

plate, however, fortunately still survive. They are of fine workmanship and bear the Pitt arms.

That he tried hard, though in vain, to curb the extravagance of his three sons is undoubtedly true; and a cursory examination of some of his letters, in which he does his best to persuade them to be thrifty and declines to give them all they ask for, might, to a reader ignorant of the circumstances in which they were written, convey the impression that he was niggardly and unduly averse to parting with his money. But in reading them it should be remembered that not one of his sons during their father's lifetime made any attempt to earn an honest livelihood for himself, and that they were all disposed to live beyond their incomes, however liberal their allowances might be. Well might their parent sorrowfully predict "Always spending and nothing comeing in will soon waste a better estate than I have got[1]," a prediction which was verified only too soon after his death. It requires some audacity to contend that the Governor, who had worked so hard for the money which he had earned, and which they so quickly squandered, had by his own example taught them to behave as they did. But Von Ruville has no hesitation in trying to make us believe that this was the case. "Though high moral exhortations are not wanting in his letters," he says, "he taught his relatives by his own behaviour to regard mammon as the mightiest of all gods; and they came to regard him as nothing more than a source of wealth, which it was their business to tap by adroitness and skill." That he sometimes responded in unmeasured language to these unscrupulous tappings is certainly no proof that he was a miser.

In striking contrast to Von Ruville's crude

[1] Dropmore I. 42.

caricature of Governor Pitt is the very flattering portrait which he gives us of his son Robert. Lord Rosebery, in his *Early Life and Connections of Chatham*, makes short work of this singularly unattractive young man, who, he tells us[1], "seems to have been a poor creature, as his portrait at Boconnoc represents him, mean and cantankerous, with some of the violence but without the vigour and ability of the Governor." According to Von Ruville, he was, as he had vainly endeavoured to persuade his father at one time, "the saint" and not "the bane of the family." We are assured that[2] "he was undoubtedly in no way to blame for the family dissensions"; that these dissensions were in no way due to any ill-temper or overbearing behaviour on his part, but were caused in the first instance by the natural disappointment which his mother and sisters felt at their inability "to gain entrance to the society of the upper nobility," the sacred circle into which Robert had entered by his marriage, "the society to which the famous family of Villiers belonged," and to which his sisters "never seem to have entirely attained, thanks to their respective characters in spite of the excellent marriages they made." Robert's extravagances in the early days of his married life were not the result of any propensity to squander money, but of a very proper filial attempt to "meet at his own expense that increased expenditure, which the maintenance of the family dignity and his father's interests involved." His taking a house in Golden Square, then one of the most fashionable and expensive quarters in London, where Bolingbroke and other Cabinet ministers with princely official incomes entertained their supporters, and his ridiculous expenditure of £500 (paid by his father) on the Old Sarum election,

[1] Rosebery 14. [2] Von Ruville I. 55.

which had never cost his father more than £10, are justified on the ground that "he was anxious to gain a political position" (which by the by he never obtained) "and thought it necessary to make a good entry into society; a plutocratic society demanded a certain minimum of expenditure.......That he had not launched out into these expenses from any tendency of his own to extravagance is," we are assured, "confirmed by the strict economy which prevailed in his house, when he had retired from political work," in other words, when he had nearly exhausted his means. We might as well be assured that the remarkably economical dietary with which the prodigal son in the parable was forced to content himself after parting with his patrimony is a strong confirmation of the view that he had no tendency of his own to wastefulness. His apologist takes an equally optimistic view of his political career. On the strength of a passage in a letter written by Sir Gilbert Dolben to his father[1] in which the latter is informed that his son's "parts and application cannot fail of rendering him knowing in the business of the House of Commons[2]," and that "he already attempts to speak, when it is proper, and will succeed very well, as soon as he shall have overcome the maiden modesty of a new member," we are told that "he was soon regarded as a rising Parliamentary star." Why he failed to rise to eminence in Parliament was "because he remained independent of parties and strove to work only for the general good." His striving does not seem to have been very strenuous; for in the next sentence we are told that "he was one of those silent natures, who quickly leave the conquerors in possession of the field, and so take all purpose from opposition attacks" (whatever that may mean) "without coming forward on

[1] Dropmore I. 17.

[2] Von Ruville I. 59.

the side of the active minority." His father, as might have been expected, was unable to regard his persistent neglect of his Parliamentary duties in this light. He puts his views with respect to it in somewhat plainer language. "You are and will be reckoned here," he writes from Pall Mall, "a slinker, whilst so many men of greater worth and value than yourself attend in their places to do their country service as occasion shall happen[1]."

Even Robert's rudeness and ingratitude to Stanhope, who had gone out of his way to obtain for him a sinecure in the household of the Prince of Wales, is represented by his admirer as an instance of his high-mindedness. "He declined," we are told, "to bow beneath the yoke, which his brother-in-law Stanhope and his father wished to lay upon him. He adopted a distant attitude to Stanhope[2], wounded his father and sister by declining to notice her children, when Thomas brought them into the room, and could not be persuaded to wait attendance on the prince." But his apologist is forced to admit that "eventually he seems to have accepted the post." In other words, his magnanimity consisted in consenting to draw the pay, while neglecting the duties, such as they were, of the office, and not only in refusing to treat his sister, whose husband had obtained it for him, with the commonest civility, but endeavouring to induce his father to refuse to receive her into his house.

To return to the father of this unworthy son. It is obvious that throughout his career, from a penniless sailor lad onwards, whilst he had a strong will of his own, a confident and well justified belief in his own powers, coupled with great perseverance, courage and common sense, he had also in a marked degree some of the defects that not infrequently

[1] Dropmore I. 68. [2] Von Ruville I. 61.

accompany these qualities, particularly in those who have been thrown early in life on their own resources, and have made their fortunes in adventurous callings. There can be but little doubt that Yule is not far wrong when he says of him, "Bold, decided and shrewd himself, he held in utter contempt those who failed in such qualities[1]." Still less doubt can there be that "in the frank, unrestrained expression of his sentiments, whether in seriousness or in merciless and rasping chaff, he must often have given offence to friends as well as foes. Foes he must have had in plenty, being such as he was." On the other hand it is clear from his correspondence that he had throughout his life many firm friends, and that, as he has himself said, he valued old friends as old gold. A bitter enemy, he was always a hearty ally. If, as undoubtedly was the case, he was ever ready to meet enmity with enmity, he might always be relied on to requite kindness with kindness. Those who trusted him never had reason to regret doing so. No man ever served his employers more effectually or faithfully. Nor does he seem to have been vindictive[2]. He says of himself: "I own 'tis my failing to be angry, tho' not revengeful. I never did my kinsman" (Consul John Pitt) "his widdow or children any prejudice, and whenever any of their affaires have been discoursed before me I alsoe chose Rather to be neutre then Judge or party and shall ever doe soe." Not only so, but in after years, notwithstanding his bitter animosity to his cousin John, he gave his son George Moreton Pitt a seat in Parliament for Old Sarum, on his own son Robert electing to sit for Oakhampton[3]; and it was probably through his influence that George Moreton Pitt was appointed in 1723 by the Court of the East India Company

[1] Hedges 3. 157.
[2] Hedges 3. 108.
[3] Hedges 3. 149, 161, 162.

Deputy Governor of Fort St David, from which position he rose in 1730 to be Governor of Fort St George. Had he been a vindictive man, it is difficult to believe that he could have brought himself to forgive his son Robert so far as deliberately to make him his heir.

The unrestrained freedom of speech in which he indulges throughout his correspondence must often, even in that plain-speaking and thick-skinned age, have given offence to those to whom it was addressed. But it has at any rate the merit of sincerity. He is never obscure, never beats about the bush, but goes straight to the point. He always writes for the purpose of letting the recipients of his letters know clearly what he thinks. When he is angry, which he had admitted to be his failing, he does not attempt to disguise the fact, but lets himself go, without any consideration for the feelings of the persons he is addressing. It is not difficult to trace in some of his outbursts of indignant wrath and disgust the germs of that insolent and exasperating presentment of unpalatable home truths which made his famous grandson the terror of his political opponents and the dreaded bogey of the two monarchs, who fortunately for England but sorely against their will were compelled to swallow their resentments, and avail themselves for only too short a time of his invaluable services. But it is most unfair to assume, as has been done by some writers, that while these angry outbursts are true indications of his character, other passages in his letters, written in cooler moods and revealing the better sides of his nature, are not equally genuine expressions of his real feelings. He wrote soberly enough on occasion[1]. "I cannot forbear," he writes home to Robert, "repeating my earnest request that you live a virtuous, sober and

[1] Dropmore I. 34.

regular sort of life, and give good example in your family." "If ever you intend to be great, you must first be good, and that will bring with it a lasting greatness, and without it, it will be a bubble blown away with the least blast." "I assure you, nothing so chagrins me as when I have a doubt upon me of the wellfare of my children." "Give example to your family by your life and conversation." "Be careful what company you keep and do not mis-spend your time." "If you are in Parliament show yourself on all occasions a good Englishman, and a faithful servant to your country. Avoid faction, attend diligently to the debate, and vote according to your conscience. I had rather see any child of mine want, than get his bread by voting in the House of Commons." For all his hard words to them when they drove him wild with their dissensions, he seems to have been an affectionate and indulgent parent. But unfortunately it is his savage sayings that most attract the attention of the reader, as they doubtless did that of the unfortunate victims to whom they were addressed. Good advice is soon forgotten; but hard words stick in the memory.

Lord Rosebery says of him[1] that "the arrival of the Indian mail must have caused a periodical panic to his children." But their father must have himself looked forward to the periodical budgets of family news from England with still greater apprehensions after once Robert had gone home. When he had parted from his children they can have been hardly out of the nursery. "I left them all," he says himself, "poor innocent children." All that he had heard of them, till Robert got back amongst them, seems to have been satisfactory. The Governor may not unreasonably at that time have looked forward to the prospect of coming back to

[1] Rosebery 9.

his wife and children, and living the rest of his days in peace in the midst of a happy family. If he had ever entertained any such a dream, it must have been rudely dissipated by the accounts which he began to receive from all quarters of the violent family quarrels that had broken out immediately after the arrival of Robert in England, to say nothing of the news which shortly followed of his wife's indiscretions at Bath. At the best of times these might well have tried the patience of a saint. Coming as they did in the midst of his irritating official troubles with the New Company and their spies, it is not surprising that they were more than the irascible old man could tamely bear, the more so as his mind was at this time not unnaturally perturbed at the belated and scanty information sent him by his son with reference to the great diamond. His anxieties on this latter score, it need hardly be said, have afforded Von Ruville an opportunity to have a fling at what he is pleased to consider one of the worst features of the poor man's character[1]. "For fifteen years," he writes, "this diamond dominated Thomas Pitt's every thought and action......His letters are full of it and they cannot be said to display his character in a favourable light. Whatever the value of the stone, to make it so integral a part of his life, and to imbitter existence on its account, argues a profound lack of finer feeling, let alone of religious sense, a low and material theory of life, which was however very general at that time among the ruling classes in England." The absurdity of this sweeping condemnation, better suited for the pages of a sensational novel than those of a grave historical work, will be obvious to anyone who will for a moment consider the main incidents, during the fifteen years in question, of the laborious and eventful

[1] Von Ruville I. 36.

life of the man to whom it refers, and be at the pains of reading such of his correspondence relating to other matters as he has left behind him. How can it be seriously maintained that the diamond dominated his every thought and action in the conduct of the Company's affairs at Fort St George; his negotiations with the Mogul, and with Martin the director of the French East India Company; his settlement of the disputes between the Right and Left Hand Castes, and the numerous important improvements and developments which he made in what he terms "his jewel of a colony"; his Parliamentary career on his return to England; his attempts to thwart what he regarded—not without good reason—as the treachery of the Tory Ministry in their negotiations for the Peace of Utrecht; his opposition to the expulsion of Steele from the House of Commons and his support of the Hanoverian succession? The only ground given for this ridiculous charge is that his letters are full of the diamond. As a matter of fact his references to it are almost exclusively to be found in a very limited number of letters written to his son and co-trustees, with practical directions how to deal with it, and asking for explanations, which seem to have been rendered necessary by the very imperfect and belated accounts which he received from them from time to time. There is no reason whatever to believe that it embittered his existence, still less that it "dominated his every thought and action," until he had got rid of it. The anxiety which its possession entailed was no more than might have been expected to be felt by any man in any age in similar circumstances. To regard his references to it in his letters as "arguing a profound lack of finer feeling, let alone of religious sense, and a low and material theory of life," is as absurd as it would be to infer from the

ordinary business correspondence of anybody at the present day, that "it displays his character in an unfavourable light," because it relates solely to business matters.

It is really too bad that the memory of a man who, whatever his imperfections may have been, did such good work for his country in his day and generation, should be blackened after this preposterous fashion ; that we should be asked to assume, from the absence of any evidence of his dishonesty, that he must have been a very cautious operator, who acquired his wealth unrighteously without leaving any trace behind him of his misdeeds ; that when he gave his children good advice, it was merely because he was inspired by the fear of a drain on his own well-filled coffers ; that when he showed any kindness to the poor or to more distant relatives, his motive was to wound the feelings of his children ; and that he was "a miser in the worst sense of the word," because he tried in vain to curb his sons' extravagances. If we may judge him by what he did and its results, it is incontestable that at a very critical time in the early history of British India he did more than any other man to uphold the prestige of his fellow countrymen in the East ; and that he was not only the worthy grandfather and great-grandfather of our two most illustrious Prime Ministers, each of whom inherited some of his most sterling qualities, and neither of whom could have attained the position which he did if it had not been for the Parliamentary influence which the Governor had acquired for his family ; but that he is also entitled to a very distinguished position in the long line of our great Proconsuls, who in every quarter of the globe, dealing with every variety of race, in the face of manifold difficulties and opposition, on the part of the Home Authorities, as well as of open enemies

abroad, have for centuries done their part to make the British Empire what it is to-day.

Like the best of them, he was not given to advertising himself or anxious for any personal honours. But for the preservation of the official entries in the daily Consultation Books of his Council, no record might have survived of much of his best and most important work at Fort St George. Nearly all his predecessors and successors in the service of the East India Company were knighted either before going out to India or on their return home. This honour had been conferred even on Vincent, and on poor Hedges, who had been sent out to bring him a prisoner to England and had failed so ignominiously on his errand. In the early years of his Presidency, it had been intimated to Pitt by Sir Stephen Evans, that the Old Company were thinking of getting him a baronetcy; but, so far from encouraging the project, he had written back at once to say that their bare thanks were of far greater value to him than any such honour. When he did return, his wealth and Parliamentary influence might have readily obtained for him a peerage if he had cared to have one. But he preferred to remain to the end of his days plain Thomas Pitt, or as he is more frequently called by contemporary writers, Governor Pitt, a title which, recalling as it must have done to him the memory of his jewel of a colony, we may be sure was as pleasing to him as that of the Great Commoner was at one time to his illustrious grandson.

The honour which he really seems to have valued more than any other throughout his life, and which he did his best to secure for his descendants after he had gone, was that of serving his country in the House of Commons. Owing to the very meagre reports of the Parliamentary proceedings of

the day, it is difficult to give an adequate account of this part of his career. But its general outlines are clear. He entered the House of Commons at the very critical time when James the Second had fled from London; and he continued to sit as member for Old Sarum until he left England as Governor of Fort St George. Within a few months after his election to the First Parliament of William and Mary, we find him serving on two important Committees[1], appointed the one to report how the African trade could be best settled for the benefit of the nation, and the other for regulating and making the militia of the kingdom more useful. From that time forward throughout his Parliamentary career, his name is constantly to be found on Committees, on which his strong common sense experience and business capacity must have been of great service. On his return from Fort St George, he re-entered the House and took a prominent part in opposing the Tory Ministry of the day; winding up the most important of the Commons debates against the Peace of Utrecht, and expressing his own views on the subject in very much the same kind of language as he habitually employed in correspondence with his opponents. About the same time his name appears in the list of those who voted against Steele's indefensible expulsion from the House. On the sudden death of Queen Anne he was one of the members nominated by the House to prepare the address to be presented to King George in Hanover. In the Parliament elected a few months later, he sat as member for Thirsk, and his three sons as members for Old Sarum, Wilton and Hendon. When this Parliament first met, he was one of the Committee appointed to draw up the reply to the

[1] *Journals of the House of Commons*, 10th and 11th October, 1690.

King's speech, which contained the assurance that his faithful Commons would make it their business to trace out the measures of the late Queen and her Ministry, on which the Pretender had built his hopes of succeeding to the throne. A few weeks later he was one of the twenty-one members elected by ballot on the Committee of Secrecy appointed to examine and report on all the documents and papers connected with the Peace of Utrecht. The work of this Committee was very onerous and responsible. The disclosures contained in its report led to the impeachment of Bolingbroke, Harley, Ormond and Strafford. It had also to prepare the articles of their impeachments; and it seems to have continued to sit for the purpose of arranging for the arming and officering of the local forces raised throughout the country for the repression of the Jacobites, wherever risings were apprehended. Though a strong party man, he was by no means a servile supporter of the policy of the Whig Ministers of the day. For example, we find him voting with the majority of the House in the division which rejected the Peerage Bill of his son-in-law Stanhope[1], which he seems to have rightly regarded, as many of his party did, as calculated to subordinate the influence of the House of Commons to that of the Hereditary Chamber. On another occasion he voted with Walpole in the minority against the Government "Bill for Strengthening the Protestant Interest[2]," which removed from the Statute Book two very obnoxious measures against Dissenters, which had been passed in the last year of Queen Anne's reign, the Schisms Act and the Act which had repealed the Occasional Conformity Act. Again, in the debates on the South Sea Scheme, he showed his independence not only by taking a

[1] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 588.
[2] *Parliamentary History*, VII. 627.

prominent part with Walpole against the Ministry before the Bill had passed and endeavouring to procure the insertion of amendments which if adopted would have prevented some of the worst mischiefs of the scheme, but also, after the collapse of the Company, in insisting on a prompt investigation of the malpractices of the Directors, notwithstanding the endeavours of Craggs and Aislabie, in which they were supported by Walpole, to postpone the inquiry. It is unlikely that he had in him the makings of a great orator or debater; but it is clear that he was a member whose opinion carried weight; that he could put his views in clear and unmistakeable language; and that his abilities as a man of affairs were recognised on both sides of the House.

Two portraits of him exist by Kneller. In each the posture, millinery and accessories are very much what might have been expected from the artist, that fond expositor of deportment and tailoring. But the old man's face seems to have baffled him; and he has found it impossible to impart to its strongly marked features that air of simpering foppish vacuity which is so characteristic of many of his fashionable portraits. It is a real, solid, expressive human face, sturdy, self-confident and masterful, and may probably be relied on as a true likeness of the man it represents as he appeared in his later years.

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